GMA orders closure of RP Embassy in Baghdad

Story on PAGE A2

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Sick boy gets dream ride to reach the sky

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—As the stereo system blared the tune "Up, up and away with my beautiful, my beautiful balloon" during the second day of the 8th Philippine International Hot-Air Balloon Festival here, Van Gerald Carrasco stepped into the four-seat Festo hot-air

SICK/ A20

WHAT'S INSIDE

- 20,000 Cotabato folk flee
  NEWS /A3
- 100,000 Indonesians join anti-war protest
  WORLD /A11
- 3 countries seek tariff compensation from RP
  BUSINESS/B1

WAR MOODS. Debbie Sereseroz (left) holds her baby as she waves goodbye to her father, Sgt. Ruben Sereseroz, who is deployed with the 743rd Maintenance Company, in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. In the Iraqi city of Tikrit, birthplace of President Saddam Hussein, an Iraqi woman holds an AK-47 rifle during a parade.

AP/REUTERS

Make-or-break talks

GMA expects big US aid package during state visit

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

AT A PRESS briefing on Friday, US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone gave insights into the close relationship between President George W. Bush and President Macapagal-Arroyo. It would be helpful to know that the ambassador gave the information against the background of Ms Macapagal's strong endorsement of Bush's warning that time was "running out" on Iraq to disarm and to stop deceiving UN inspectors searching for Iraq's facilities storing or producing weapons of mass destruction.

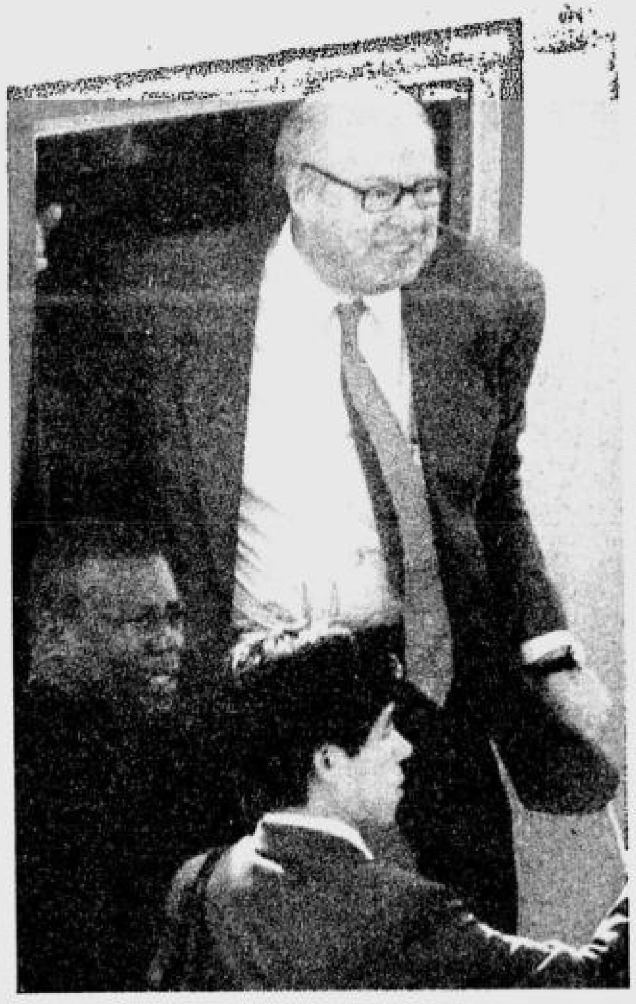
Ricciardone, who was posted as a senior diplomat in the Middle East and Iraq in the mid-1990s (after the 1991 Gulf War), talked about whether President Saddam Hussein of Iraq would avoid war by suddenly opening to the UN inspectors the doors to its banned weapons. He said he would be surprised if Saddam "pulled a surprise," but such a reversal is one of two options that could avert war. The other option was for Saddam to step down.

But more useful to us is Ricciardone's remark that Ms Macapagal's visit to the United States in April will be conducted on the highest level—a state visit.

This will be the third state visit under the Bush administration. The first was that of President Vicente Fox of Mexico and the other, that of President Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland.

Both presidents have demonstrated strong support for Bush's war policy on Iraq. Kwasniewski recently rallied

GMA/ A18



UN arms inspections chief Hans Blix arrives at the Saddam airport near Baghdad for two days of crucial disarmament talks with Iraqi officials. REUTERS

A flurry of initiatives out to counter US war plan

BAGHDAD—As the countdown to a possible US invasion of Iraq gathered momentum, top UN weapons inspectors on Sunday resumed crucial talks with Iraqi officials after a "useful" day on which Baghdad handed over documents intended to answer questions about its chemical and biological weapons.

There was a flurry of diplomatic initiatives elsewhere to stave off war as the United States and Britain accelerated their flow of troops and fighting machines to the Gulf region.

In Munich, German Defense Minister Peter Struck on Sunday confirmed that Berlin and Paris would present to the UN Security Council a joint plan to avert war in Iraq by reinforcing UN inspections. Russian President Vladimir Putin is headed for Germany and France for meetings with opponents of a US military campaign.

In Egypt, President Hosni Mubarak met at his seaside retreat Sunday with the leaders of Syria and Libya to discuss making a last-ditch overture to Iraq, which has come under increasing pressure from fellow Arab states who say Baghdad could do more to spare the region from war.

In Johannesburg, the Sunday Times newspaper reported that Arab states had requested former South African President Nelson Mandela to negotiate an exit plan for Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

The Iraqis gave the inspectors more documents during the Sunday morning session, but their value was not immediately clear, a spokesperson for the International Atomic Energy Agency said after the session ended.

The success or failure of the two days of talks could help decide the next steps taken by the UN Security Council in the months-long standoff that has left the Middle East suspended between war and peace.

Hans Blix, chief UN arms inspector, and Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the UN nuclear agency, entered the foreign ministry at about 10:15 a.m. (7:15 GMT) for a morning session with an Iraqi delegation led by presidential adviser Amer al-Saadi.

ElBaradei's spokesperson Mark Gwozdecky said the Iraqis gave the chief inspectors more documents in the morning session, which ended at 12:15 p.m. (9:15 GMT), after "very detailed technical discussions." The value of the material produced thus far was still being evaluated.

The meeting was to resume in the afternoon, and the inspectors were to depart Baghdad on Monday morning.

MAKE-OR-BREAK/ A19

OFWs warn solons on money laundering act

OVERSEAS Filipino workers are warning senators and congressmen of their "wrath" in the next elections should legislators fail to amend the Anti-Money Laundering Act by Wednesday.

The deadline was set by the Paris-based anti-money laundering Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which has threatened to place inbound transactions under close scrutiny or compel foreign banks to refuse remittance of money to local banks.

But Congress may not be able to meet the deadline as 11 senators are against amendments seeking to lower the threshold on suspect transactions to P500,000 and to eliminate the need for a court order to open bank accounts.

The existing law says a special anti-money laundering task force can only investigate bank transactions of at least P4 million after getting a court order.

"We are warning these senators. They have no business staying in the Senate if they cannot protect the welfare of the overseas Filipino workers and our families," said Noel Josue, executive director of the Kaibigan ng OCWs, in a statement.

Filipinos residing overseas, including OFWs and immigrants, will be allowed to vote in the 2004 elections upon the passage of the Absentee Voting Bill this year.

Josue and other leaders of OFW groups have expressed apprehension that remittances to their families will be delayed or will cost a lot more to process should the Philippines fail to conform with the standards set by the FATF, a group representing rich countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan and Italy, where many Filipinos are working.

"We are worried that OFW families will be penalized should Congress fail to enact the AMLA amendments," said Nelson Ramirez of United Filipino Seafarers. "Is this their way of treating the OFWs, who they call the "*bagong bayani* (new heroes)?" he asked.

Without the amended law, the daily delivery of some $370 million, about P20 billion, could be stalled, according to the Accelerating Growth Investment and Liberalization with Equity consultancy.

Mildred Yamzon of the Women in Development Foundation said delayed remittances could lead the families of OFWs into deeper financial troubles. "In case our remittances are delayed,

OFWs/ A18

Jimenez an illegal alien?

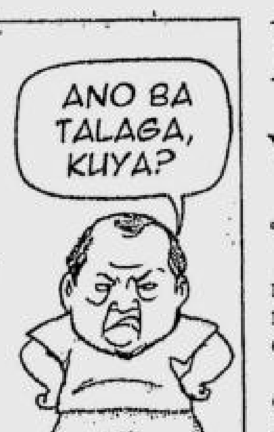
By Gerald G. Lacuarta

HE had said he was leaving for the United States because there was "no justice in the Philippines." But now Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez, in Miami, Florida to face criminal charges, is finding the American brand of justice not exactly to his liking.

Jimenez is awaiting US Judge Ted Bandstra's order releasing him from jail, after putting up a total of $500,000 in surety bonds (about P27 million). But he may be merely exchanging one detention cell for another.

On Dec. 30, the US Immigration and Naturalization

JIMENEZ/ A18



House approves bill vs domestic violence

"I AM woman, hear me roar."

Women with abusive partners need not suffer in silence much longer. Domestic violence may be about to become history.

The House of Representatives passed on third reading on Friday the proposed Act Defining the Crime of Abuse of Women in Intimate Relationships, or Anti-Awir Bill. It covers all women in any relationship with a sexual component, legal or otherwise—wives, live-in partners, girlfriends.

And it's not just about physical or sexual violence, or just about men.

House Bill No. 5516 also seeks to penalize psychological and economic abuse by a partner who may be male or female. The scope is as daunting as the sanctions: depending on the gravity of the offense, the erring partner could be

HOUSE/ A20

Terror alters business ways, says author

By John Nery

WHEN THE GOING gets tough, the tough get security—lots of it.

Best-selling author Tom Peters believes the age of terrorism has changed the way business is done in a fundamental way. After Sept. 11, security is no longer merely a cost of doing business but a condition for doing business in the first place.

"I think it reinforces some changes and introduces new ones," Peters, who arrives today for a one-day business seminar in Makati City tomorrow, says of the terrorist threat. Characteristically, the man credited with launching the entire "management guru" industry 20 years ago offers anecdotal evidence to support his statement.

I am "depending on IBM for security rather than governments," he says in the 25-minute overseas telephone interview. As it happens,

TERROR/ A18

PETERS

INTERNET PHOTO (COURTESY WASHSPKRS.COM)

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: CHONA GALANG PDI RESEARCH/02/10/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Mostly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Mostly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Mostly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Mostly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Mostly Cloudy

GMA orders Baghdad embassy closed

By Carlito Pablo

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered the closure on Feb. 11 of the Philippine Embassy in Baghdad, the Iraqi capital, National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said yesterday.

The embassy will be moved to Amman, Jordan, said Golez who has been designated "crisis manager" of the country's contingency plans in a possible United States-Iraq war.

Golez said the President also ordered the clearing out of Iraq of all Filipino "non-essential personnel," many of whom are employees of United Nations agencies there.

The order to close the embassy and evacuate Filipinos came as the US has come closer to launching an attack on Iraq, which it accuses of harboring weapons of mass destruction.

The UN's chief weapons inspector Hans Blix is scheduled to deliver his final report on the Iraqi weapons program to the UN Security Council on Feb. 14.

Golez maintained that the government would receive advance notice from the US when the hostilities are about to start.

Usual notice

"That (notice) will go through the normal diplomatic channels," he said. "The US embassy will give the usual notice to the Department of Foreign Affairs."

There are 119 Filipinos in Iraq. There are four remaining staff members of the embassy, including Ambassador Grace Escalante. Eight embassy personnel were earlier moved out of Baghdad.

Golez said he did not think Iraq would retaliate by closing down its embassy in Manila.

"We are closing the embassy in Baghdad for practical reasons at the proper time because it will be a target. The Iraqi embassy here is not a target so I don't see any reason why they will close their embassy here," he said.

Asked in what way the embassy in Baghdad could become a target, Golez said: "It is very near targets so prudence dictates that the place should be evacuated at the proper time."

Golez said there are Filipino women who are married to Iraqis. Whether these Filipinas should also be moved out would depend on whether they themselves wished it, he said.

As for Filipinos in neighboring Kuwait, the plan was a combination of relocation or staying put as, in the judgment of the Middle East Preparedness Team, this group of Filipinos was not really at risk.

"Right now the MEPT is coordinating with the Kuwaiti government because it has its own contingency plan and our contingency plan will have to jibe with that of the Kuwait government," Golez said.

Security in South

In the same way that security precautions are being heightened in anticipation of a war in the Middle East, the Bureau of Immigration opened on Thursday a sub-port or border station at Brooke's Point in Palawan to serve as an immigration checkpoint and monitoring station.

This would in effect close the Palawan back door to the BIMP-EAGA (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines-East Asean Growth Area) region, said BID Commissioner Andrea Domingo.

"Brooke's Point will no longer be a backdoor, it will be very well-guarded," said Domingo who graced the opening of the border station with the US Consul General David Donahue and Palawan Vice Governor David Ponce de Leon.

Donahue denied his visit was connected to the anti-terrorism campaign of the US. He said he works with Domingo on immigration matters, like border controls, "so she invited us to visit other parts of the country."

Brooke's Point, together with its neighboring municipality of Bataraza, has been often used as the back door to Malaysia and Indonesia.

One of the reasons why smuggling is rampant in this area is because traders just come and go without any documentation, Domingo said, adding that she was aware of the incidence of illegal aliens entering the country through the town's open port.

Llamas killer

Bashir Abdulrahman, the suspect in the killing of Ateneo Law graduate Jose Ramon Llamas, reportedly used the backdoor to escape the country.

Domingo said that while the sub-port would make things easy for foreigners who want to invest here, it will also secure the country's borders.

Starting Feb. 15, residents and foreigners who used to travel more than 200kms to avail of immigration services in the capital of Puerto Princesa would now need only go to Brooke's Point.

The immigration sub-port will be linked to the bureau's database in Manila.

Aside from servicing foreigners who come in as investors and tourists in southern Palawan, immigration officials will also gather information and monitor suspicious movements of foreigners.

With a report from Dominique Monera-Tabora and Jofelle Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Nothing irregular about GMA's stand on Iraq, Ople says

By Norman Bordadora

FOREIGN Secretary Blas Ople said yesterday that President Macapagal-Arroyo, in openly supporting the United States in its campaign to disarm Iraq, was merely being consistent with her earlier support for the US-led global war against terrorism.

Ople said the President was also being consistent with United Nations Security Council Resolution No. 1441 calling on Iraq to destroy the weapons of mass destruction that are allegedly in its arsenal.

"The President is merely being consistent. She was one of the first heads of state to pledge support for the US-led global coalition against terrorism," the foreign secretary said.

"And with respect to Iraq and Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction, she's merely being consistent with her previous announcements that the road to peace is for Saddam to renounce his weapons of mass destruction and destroy them in accordance with the demand of Security Council Resolution 1441," Ople added.

The President has been criticized by militant groups and even by her own coalition members for saying she was convinced of the US position following US Secretary of State Colin Powell's presentation of evidence on Iraq's alleged possession of illegal weapons before the Security Council.

Powell also told the UN the Saddam government had links with the al-Qaida international terror network of Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden.

In a news conference over the weekend, Ople said he would summon Iraqi chargé d'affaires Samir Bolus this week in the wake of an impending US attack on Iraq and the President's call for Saddam to disarm.

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Who needs Green Berets? Not RP

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—There is no need for American Green Berets to fight alongside Filipino troops in Mindanao "because our soldiers can do it alone," said Lt. Gen. Narciso Abaya, chief of the Army's Southern Command.

Abaya, guest speaker at the Philippine Military Academy recognition rites here on Sunday, said the government's victories against the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group could be credited solely to the Filipino soldiers despite the assistance of the US military through joint exercises with the locals.

Abu weakened

Abaya was reacting to a report that US President George W. Bush would allow the Green Berets, the US Army's elite force, to participate in combat against the Abu Sayyaf.

"Our soldiers have (weakened) the military capability of the Abu Sayyaf without receiving actual help from the American troops," Abaya said.

He said the Abu Sayyaf's forces are down to three groups with their operations concentrated only in Western Mindanao.

Abaya said the role of the US troops participating in the ongoing Bayanihan 03-5 military exercise in Mindanao was clear.

"They are to train, assist and advise Filipino soldiers—any participation in combat would violate both the Military Logistics Support Arrangement (MLSA) and the Constitution," he said.

But the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan yesterday expressed alarm over President Macapagal-Arroyo's reported approval of a White House plan to deploy Green Berets to fight the Abu Sayyaf, saying this was tantamount to turning the country into another Vietnam.

Bayan secretary general Teodoro Casiño said there was no guarantee the Green Berets would go after only the Abu Sayyaf and not "revolutionary" groups like the New People's Army and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

"There would be no stopping the US from launching attacks not just on the Abu Sayyaf but on other groups it considers terrorist. This prospect is not too far-fetched, considering the crazed unilateralism and warmongering pervading the White House," Casiño said

Casiño noted that the US was trying to meddle in Philippine military affairs as it had done in Vietnam in the 1970s. *Jovelyn Reyes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau, and Agnes E. Donato*

Thousands flee Pikit ahead of soldiers

KIDAPAWAN CITY—Some 20,000 civilians from at least 10 barangays in Pikit, Cotabato have fled their homes following the buildup of military troops in the area.

Dr. Ernest Guevarra, director of Balik-Kalipay, a nongovernment organization working with families affected by armed conflicts in Pikit, said at least five military tanks arrived Saturday night. Earlier that day, he said, at least 10 six-by-six trucks arrived loaded with soldiers.

Negotiations

This was confirmed by 6th Infantry Division spokesperson Maj. Julieto Ando, who said government troops were massing in the area after sightings had been reported of "a lawless armed group and persons who had committed crimes of mass destruction like bombings and kidnappings."

The massive evacuation began after Pikit Mayor Farida Malingco failed to negotiate the withdrawal of the government troops.

A source told the INQUIRER that Malingco tried, but failed, to convince the military to pull out of the area, so he called instead for the village leaders to order an evacuation.

Guevarra said the exodus started in Barangay Kabasalan on Friday night, followed by the evacuation of villagers from Gli-gli, Rajamuda, Buliok, Bulol, Bago Ingid, Bulod, Talitay, Barongos and Inog-og.

Makeshift

The evacuees are living in makeshift housing along the highway in Barangay Batolawan, also in Pikit, and in the town plaza. Some are staying in Madrasahs (Muslim schools) in Bulol, Bulod and Bago Ingid, Guevarra said.

There have been no reports of encounters between the military and the armed group it seeking yet.

But Ando admitted that what triggered the military's move was the reported "massing of MILF forces in Kabasalan and Buliok," which are located along the Liguasan Marsh. *Jeffrey M. Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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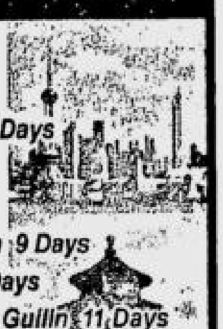

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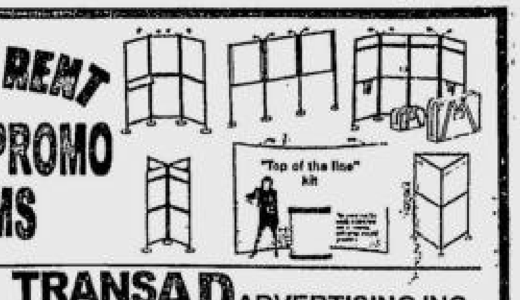

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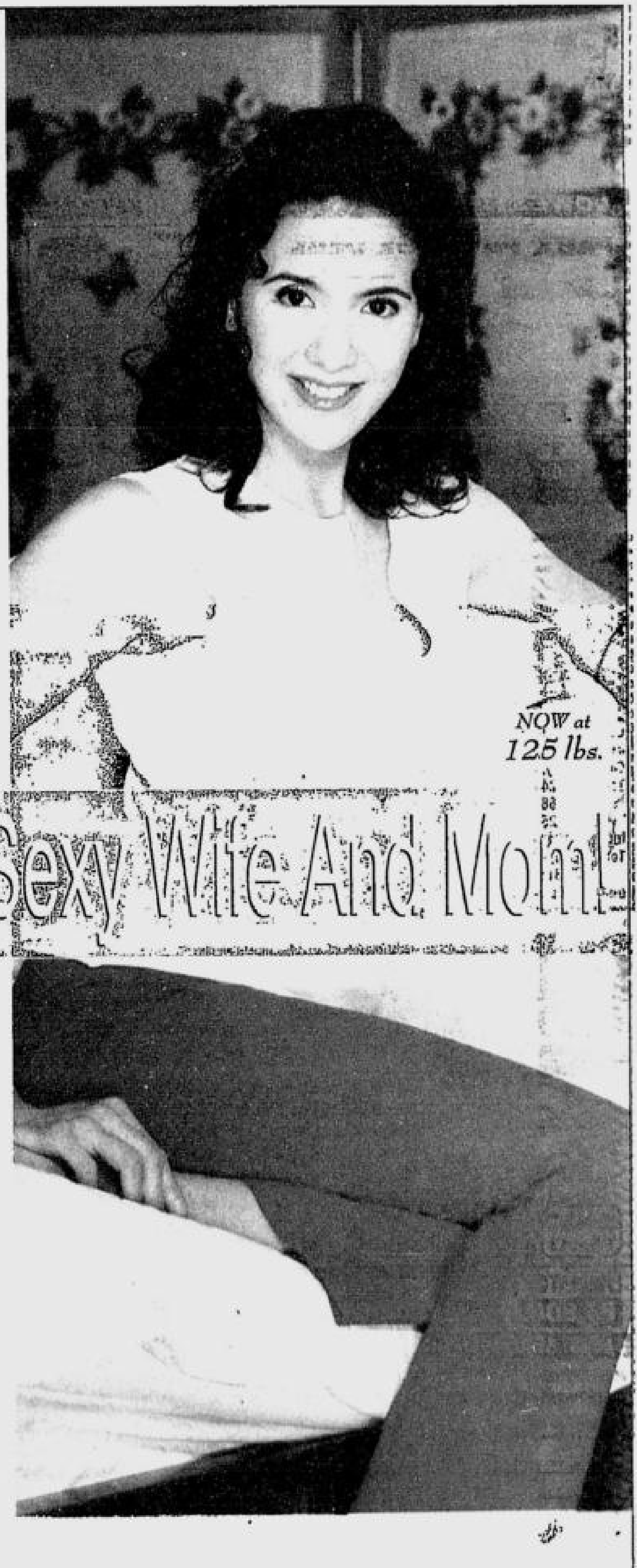

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‘Piatco almost got $374-M gov’t guarantee’

By Tony Bergonia
Asst. National News Editor

THE government came close to guaranteeing the payment of $374 million in loans that the builder of the controversial Ninoy Aquino International Airport-3 terminal was borrowing from the Asian Development Bank months before President Macapagal Arroyo declared the Naia-3 contract onerous.

An official privy to negotiations for a “supplemental agreement No. 4” that would have sealed the government guarantee said the new agreement would have resulted in the government assuring the payment of at least $374 million in loans that the ADB would release to the Philippine Air Terminals Co. Inc.

A provision of supplemental agreement No. 4 under the heading “Security” read: “if Concessionaire (Piatco) is in default under a payment or other obligation owed to Senior Lenders...the Senior Lenders shall have the right to notify the GRP (government of the Republic of the Philippines) of the same and...to either in good faith identify and designate a nominee which is qualified...to operate the Development Facility (Naia-3) or transfer the Concessionaire’s rights and obligations...to a transferee which is qualified.”

An official who helped draft supplemental agreement No. 4 said top transportation officials had already given the go-signal for the new agreement’s signing.

But one of the top officials who were supposed to sign on behalf of the government refused to sign after he saw the provision that would give a government guarantee to the $374 million loan being contracted by Piatco.

Key to deal

“The agreement was the key to the $374 million. If it had been signed, I can’t imagine the mess it would create,” said the official, who requested not to be identified.

The now unsigned agreement would have released $374 million from the ADB for Piatco to complete work at the Naia-3.

The loan, under supplemental agreement No. 4, would be guaranteed by the Philippine government.

The drafting of supplemental agreement No. 4 comes on the heels of the signing of two earlier agreements that amended the Naia-3 contract but which did not pass through the scrutiny of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) in violation of Philippine laws.

The Build-Operate-Transfer Law required that any amendment or changes in any infrastructure contract of the magnitude as that of the Naia-3 should first be put under Neda scrutiny before they are deemed binding.

But supplemental agreements No. 1 and 2, documents showed, were signed long before they were even submitted to the Neda.

The first supplemental agreement allowed a major change in the design of the Naia-3. The original design required that a tunnel be built to link Naia-2 and Naia-3 but the first supplemental agreement changed it into an access road, saying that a tunnel “is not economically viable at the present.”

In a hearing at the Senate on Sept. 16, 2002, Piatco legal counsel Eduardo de los Angeles testified that “no major changes were made on the core of the build-operate-transfer project.”

A copy of supplemental agreement No. 1, signed in August 1999 by then Transportation Secretary Vicente Rivera and Piatco president Cheng Yong, said the government and Piatco “agree that the proposed underground connection between Terminals II and III...is not economically viable at present.”

Payment deductions

The second supplemental agreement reaffirmed the shift from a tunnel to an access road and in addition provided that excavation works and other clearing operations at the Naia-3 site would be shouldered by Piatco and the costs of these deducted from the payments that Piatco is scheduled to make to the government.

In a letter dated July 19, 2001 that was in response to queries made by airport general manager Edgardo Manda, the Neda, through deputy director general Gilberto Llanto, wrote: “We would like to inform you that the ICC (Investment Coordinating Council) Secretariat (of the Neda) did not receive any submission of the First and Second Supplements to the Amended and Restated Concession Agreement between the Government of the Philippines...and the Philippine International Air Terminals Co. Inc...pursuant to the implementing rules and regulations of the amended BOT Law.”

In response to the Neda letter, Manda wrote on July 25, 2001 to then Transportation Secretary Alvarez to advise “the (DOTC) Steering Committee to submit to the Neda-ICC the said supplements.”

“The immediate submission is vital considering that should Neda-ICC determine there are substantial changes and deviations from the parameter set and approved by the ICC, then the revisions to the contract shall be rendered invalid for failure to first seek ICC clearance...,” Manda’s letter read.

Manda, contacted by phone, refused to comment on the exchange of letters, but another official privy to the government-Piatco contract said the decision to junk the tunnel component of the Naia-3 was highly irregular because it had no prior approval by the Neda as required by the BOT Law.

“It was illegal,” said the official who talked on condition of anonymity.

“The supplemental agreements were deliberately hidden from the Neda,” said the official.

“What was there to hide in the two supplemental agreements?” asked the official.

After texting, BIR looks to ‘tips’ for revenue

By Gerald G. Lacuarta

FIRST they wanted to tax phone texting. Now the taxmen are going after the tips of casino personnel.

After the government rejected a proposed tax on text messaging, the Bureau of Internal Revenue is setting its sights on “tips” received by employees of the state-run Casino Filipino as a possible source of revenue to arrest the ballooning budget deficit.

The BIR was acting on a report from a former casino manager that gaming employees of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) have not been declaring the tips that they receive as part of their income.

Richard Syhongpan, a former manager of the Casino Filipino branch in Davao City, declared in an affidavit that the total tip collections from the Casino Filipino’s 12 branches nationwide run up to P80 million a month, or almost a billion pesos a year.

“Imagine how much potential revenue is lost because of government’s failure to impose taxes on this income received by casino workers,” Syhongpan said in an interview.

Syhongpan said the total collection from tips could very well equal the income of the country’s top 100 corporations.

Tips received by casino workers such as dealers are pooled into a national “Central Service Fund” that is managed by a Service Fund Committee staffed by casino managers and employees. Members of the committee receive wages from Pagcor but work full time in the committee’s office at the Casino Filipino branch at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

A look at the minutes of the meeting of the committee on Aug. 15, 2002 revealed that the fund has total deposits of P890,000 at the Land Bank of the Philippines and a dollar account worth $17,119 as of Aug. 11 that year. The fund also has peso and dollar deposits of P3.3 million and $71,866 at the Philippine National Bank, also as of that date.

According to the records, the top three collectors of tips are the Casino Filipino branches in Laoag City, Pavilion in Manila and Heritage in Pasay City.

Syhongpan, who at one time headed the committee in the 1990s, said the Commission on Audit had once investigated the fund because to the COA auditors, the shares of employees from the pooled tips are like salaries as they are distributed every 15 days. To head off the probe and avoid being taxed by the BIR, the committee decided to distribute the tips more frequently.

Acting on Syhongpan’s report, the BIR’s tax fraud division will summon officials of the Service Fund Committee to check its records and compute back taxes, aside from filing appropriate charges for non-declaration of income.

The government has been looking for possible sources of revenue to reduce the deficit that stood at P213 billion in 2002, exceeding the previous year’s P147 billion by 45 percent, or P66 billion.

The BIR is also seeking to implement the collection of the value-added tax on fees received by professionals and entertainers, which should have started on Jan. 1. This has been protested noisily by members of the entertainment industry.

The BIR collected only P393.5 billion in 2002 against a collection target of P447.6 billion.

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'Barefaced liars,' Lagman's followers tag CPP leaders

LUCENA CITY—The underground group that slain rebel leader Felimon "Ka Popoy" Lagman founded refuses to buy the Communist Party of the Philippines line that another breakaway communist faction was responsible for the murder of the labor leader two years ago.

"The CPP leadership's latest denial of responsibility for the assassination of Ka Popoy Lagman is not worth the paper it is written on, coming as it does from barefaced liars and unrepentant Stalinists," Patricio Ramirez, spokesperson of the Partido ng Manggagawang Pilipino (PMP), said in a statement yesterday.

On Friday, CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal pointed to Nilo de la Cruz, the former chieftain of the dreaded New People's Army Sparrow Unit who had broken away from the CPP, as the one who killed Lagman at the University of the Philippine campus two years ago.

Rosal claimed that De la Cruz and his fellow "rejectionists" from the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade has killed Lagman "because of money disputes."

He said Lagman was killed because he allegedly appropriated more than P400 million in alleged bribe money paid by the PEA-Amari company for his group's cooperation in the eviction of squatters from Freedom island in Parañaque. This was belied by Ramirez.

Ramirez said Rosal's statement was a ploy aimed not so much at clearing the CPP as slandering the revolutionary record of Lagman and "(provoking) a bloody intrigue" between the PMP and the RPM-RPA-ABB.

He said that Rosal, in asserting that the Lagman group was preparing to wreak vengeance on the RPA-ABB, was creating bad blood between the two groups and could invite reprisal from the latter.

"We will not fall prey to bloody intrigue among the Left that the CPP is naively provoking and the state is carefully manipulating," Ramirez said. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

'80s purge an error, Commies now admit

LUCENA CITY—In an attempt to erase the stigma of a bloody episode that has haunted the revolutionary movement for decades, the central committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines has admitted that the infamous "cleansing purge" that the party conducted during the late 1980s was a grave error.

"In the thoroughgoing review conducted on all cases in general and on each individual case, the committee came to the conclusion that there was no solid basis to suspect and arrest the 55 comrades who were accused of being enemy infiltrators," the committee said in a statement released recently by the party's information bureau.

It added that "there was no basis whatsoever" for the execution of a number of those who were purged.

The CPP now considers the victims of the bloody purge "martyrs of the revolution."

The anti-infiltration campaign in the Southern Tagalog region, dubbed "Operation Missing Link" or OPML, was conducted in 1988 and resulted in the arrest, detention and torture of 55 CPP cadres and members and New People's Army fighters, some of whom were executed.

In its investigation, the party's central leadership "concluded that the indiscriminate arrests, cases of torture and execution of comrades suspected of being enemy infiltrators was hysteria in its extreme and a grave error." *Delfin T. Mallari Jr. and Clarice Colting, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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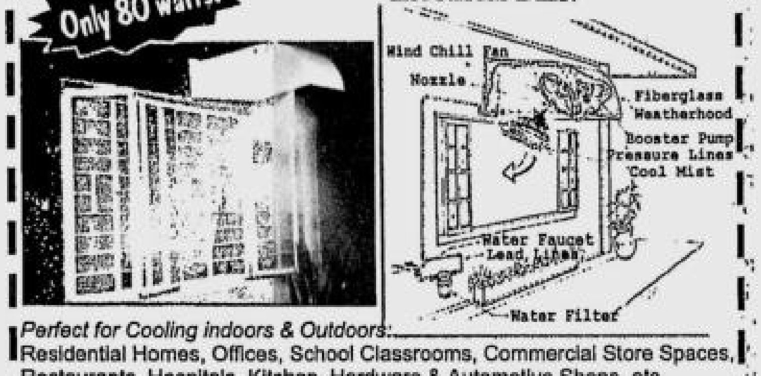
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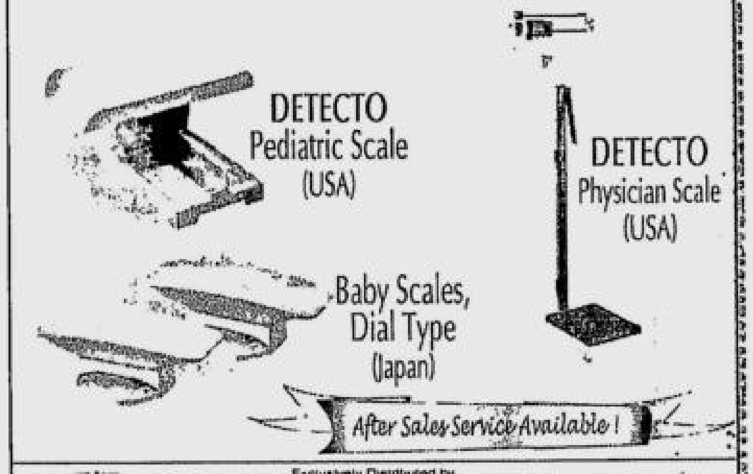
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OUR WORK SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY AND MARCH

Sixty percent of the text messages, calls, and e-mails we have been receiving are complaints about the increasing PPA charges on their electric bills. In response to this clamor, we will undertake a comprehensive study, working closely with the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC), the Department of Energy, PSALM, NAPOCOR, TRANSCO, and MERALCO, to achieve the following:

1. **Explain why the PPA increased when the President reduced it from P1.25 to 40 centavos.**
2. **Present the actual billings of a residential customer consuming 300 kwh a month, who represent 77% of total MERALCO customers. Actual billing will give a monthly breakdown from January 2002 to December 2002 and show the monthly increase or decrease together with an explanation.**

SEPARATE MEETINGS WITH ERC, NAPOCOR, AND MERALCO

In these meetings, we will request for information and status on the following:

- **ERC - to inform us when the unbundling of the power rates of the 139 electric utility firms nationwide will be completed and the status of pending petitions with the ERC.**
- **MERALCO - to furnish us with the cost of power purchased from NAPOCOR and their other suppliers and the Currency Exchange Rate Adjustment (CERA).**
- **NAPOCOR - to furnish us with a breakdown of their PPA charges to electric utilities and the stranded cost, which is power paid for but not utilized from NAPOCOR supply contracts with 40 Independent Power Producers (IPP).**
- **Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management (PSALM) - to brief us if the 40 centavos Universal Charge-stranded cost that will be paid by all users based on a $3.7 billion debt or P190 billion levelized over 20 years - is sufficient, considering the following:**

  the assumptions pegging forex at Php51.33 to the dollar in 2001 with an annual depreciation of the Peso based on 2-3% inflation every year over the 20 year period; and the delay in the privatization of TRANSCO.

  Also, to brief us on the result of the renegotiation of the 40 independent power contracts, the cost reduction and effectivity and the remaining contracts that have to be renegotiated.

After the individual briefing, we will meet with Energy Secretary Vince Perez for a summary of our discussions and the issues that have to be addressed and resolved.

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World responds to Brazilian mother's plight

By Blanche S. Rivera

AN OUTPOURING of love and support from around the country and abroad has reached Sandra de Carvalho-Ocier, the Brazilian national fighting deportation from the Philippines in order to stay close to her three young children by a Filipino.

Sandra, currently confined at the hospital in Makati Medical Center following a surgical procedure, has received numerous letters and e-mail from strangers who learned of her plight through media reports and her web site (www.rsnyrealty.com/sandra/index.html).

The e-mails, many of them from Filipino professionals who live in the United States, offered sympathy, advice and help. Mothers asked Sandra not to give up, and vowed to pray for her.

Imelda Roberts, a Filipino in Washington DC, has circulated an e-mail titled "An Incredible Story of Love for Children," asking her own friends to help Sandra in any way they could.

Roberts said she found Sandra's plight "touching—full of courage, spirit and faith." And because it was a predicament that she would not wish on anyone, Roberts said she was sharing the tale with her friends in the hope that one of them, or someone they knew, could help: "There is power in numbers, so kindly (forward) this to your friends in the US and the Philippines!"

The circulated message detailed Sandra's efforts to win back her kids, and her subsequent arrests by the Bureau of Immigration which, she believed, acted on the instance of her powerful Chinese-Filipino husband, Henry Ocier.

Sandra has been engaged in a seven-year battle with Henry, scion of the clan that owns Belle Resources in Tagaytay, and whose brother was a known crony of former President Joseph Estrada.

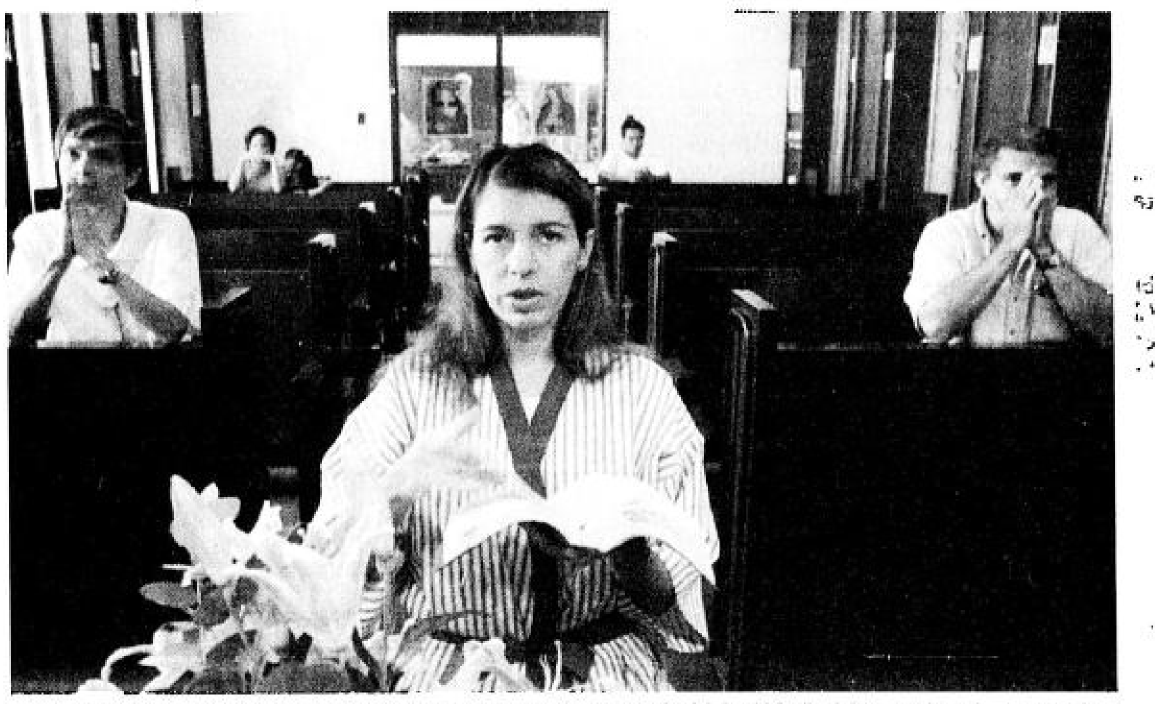
Despite visitation rights granted her by the courts, Sandra has been prevented from seeing her three sons—Vinicius, 12; Victor, 10 and William, 9—regularly since her husband took off with them in November 1995.

The petition for annulment filed by her husband before a Quezon City court has barely prospered, and neither has the battle for custody of their children moved. Sandra is Ocier's second wife.

Frustrated, exhausted

She said her children, whom she last saw on Jan. 4, were being moved around a lot, their home addresses and schools kept from her by her husband's family.

"I am struggling to get back to work, and (win) back my visitation rights. It seems hopeless sometimes, and I feel so tired," Sandra told the INQUIRER during an interview Friday night at the Makati Medical Center.


SANDRA de Carvalho-Ocier spends much of her time in prayer at the Makati Medical Center chapel. EDWIN BACASMAS

For most of the day, she is attended to only by friendly nurses. Her maid, whom she sends to school, comes in the afternoon and stays until evening. She has no family here besides her children who have not visited her since her last arrest.

"But I feel so blessed that even if my family is not around, people I don't know have been coming from all directions, (doing things) for me, going here and there, following up papers," Sandra said.

She glanced at her bedside table, on which stood a card drawn by one of the kids in her neighborhood in Cubao. The message read: "We love you, Tita Sandra."

During the Fourth World Meeting of Families last month, she wrote a letter seeking the Catholic Church's intervention "for a mother in very desperate need." Friends handed out the letter to conference delegates.

These friends are still pleading with the Church mainly for help with the bureaucracy which, Sandra said, had caused the delays in the processing of her immigration papers. While her sons hold dual citizenship, she is still officially an alien.

She earlier told media that her husband deliberately did not help her acquire Filipino citizenship "because he meant from the very start to take our sons away from me." The BI had used the delays as grounds for her arrests and soon, for her deportation.

On Dec. 3, 2002, the immigration office "suddenly" issued an order for her deportation. She reported to the BI on Jan. 6 to fulfill conditions for her probation, but was arrested. While in detention, she needed an appendectomy, and was brought to the hospital two weeks ago.

"It stinks"

"Like you, I am a mother. I feel so ashamed about what my fellow Filipinos are doing to you. It's so unfair and it stinks," said Carmelita Caparos in an e-mail to Sandra.

Still another e-mail read: "My heart goes out to you, Sandra. I could never imagine the pain if my children were taken away from me. I am only an ordinary person, but I will pray for you and your kids because there is nothing impossible with God. Don't give up."

The beleaguered mother is fighting to stay, not just to win the court battles but to win back the hearts of her sons. She said they have "drifted away," believing that she was seeking custody only so she could partake of their father's money.

Sandra said she understood her sons' sentiments because her husband's family had told them that she was dead, and later that she was alive but had abandoned them.

"How I wish I could bring them to the park, even Rizal Park," she sighed, approaching tears. "Or maybe to Enchanted Kingdom, or Boom na Boom. Kids love amusement parks. Or we can just go biking and kick some ball."

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‘New Age’ teachings alarms Catholic Church

By Blanche S. Rivera

ALARMED by the growing “New Age” movement in the country, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines said it hopes to strengthen the teaching of catechism in schools and parishes to dissuade Catholics from adopting the “modern” teachings.

In his introduction to a CBCP primer on the New Age movement, CBCP president Archbishop Orlando Quevedo said the Catholic Church was “particularly and strongly concerned” about the prevalence of the “new” teachings.

Quevedo noted the increasing number of Catholics who believe in fortune telling, feng shui, tarot cards, horoscopes, reincarnation, karma and other New Age beliefs that are “incompatible with the Christian faith.”

“Catechesis is urgently necessary.” Quevedo said, adding that many of the spiritual concerns raised by the New Age movement were relevant to Catholics, many of whom have been feeling alienated from the Church.

“Given the present generally uninformed and merely ritualistic quality of our Filipino Christian faith, our pastoral concern for adequate catechesis to meet the challenge of New Age becomes even more urgent,” he said.

The New Age movement started in the country in the 1960s, attracting many disillusioned Catholics and challenging the convictions of Christianity.

Quevedo said many seminars and retreats were given to groups of Catholics who were not aware of the religious and philosophical roots of the New Age movement.

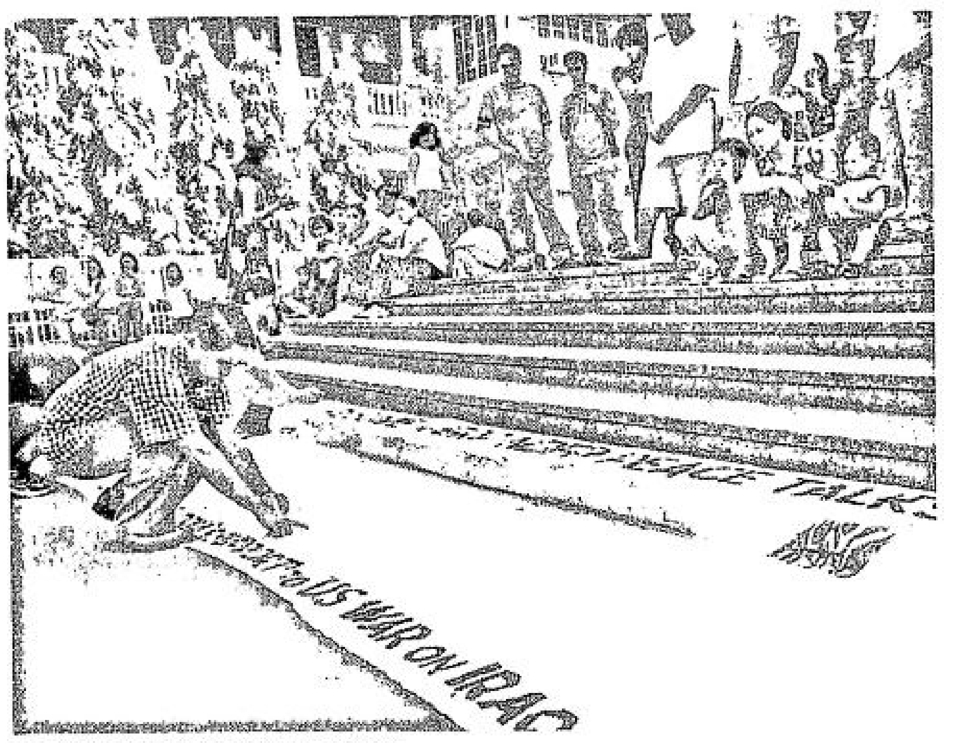
The CBCP primer, which will be distributed to the Catholic laity and clergy, was the product of a year-long study done by a task force of Jesuits and lay people that was completed last month.

The CBCP created the task force to review literature on New Age teachings and see if these contradicted the teachings of the Catholic Church.

The research showed that many New Age teachings on God, Christ, the human person, salvation, redemption, resurrection and religious experience were not in accordance with the teachings of Christianity.

“God gives us the freedom to choose between good and evil. Life is not pre-determined by tarot cards, horoscopes and feng shui,” said CBCP secretary general Msgr. Ding Coronel in an earlier interview.

“If fortune-telling was real, they (fortune tellers) should be millionaires by now because they could predict the winning numbers in a lotto game,” he said.



MUCH TO PROTEST ABOUT

Members of the militant youth group Anakbayan sign a huge streamer calling for peace talks between the government and the communist National Democratic Front as well as an end to Philippine support for United States aggression against Iraq, at the steps of the Redemptorist Church in Baclaran, Parañaque City yesterday.

ERIK ARAZAS

Erap appointee refuses to budge

AN APPOINTEE of jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada who was dismissed for alleged graft refuses to leave his post rejecting a Malacañang order relieving him from office.

“A President appointed me to this post, only a President can boot me out,” said Fernando Melendres, director of the Lung Center of the Philippines.

Melendres is an uncle of an alleged mistress of Estrada, Joy Melendres.

In a telephone interview, Melendres said the order for his dismissal came from Manuel Gaite, acting deputy executive secretary for legal affairs of Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo.

The order also provided for the forfeiture of Melendres' retirement benefits and his permanent disqualification from public office.

The order, which was handed down on Feb. 4 and was to take effect immediately, stemmed from charges before the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission that Melendres violated auditing and bidding rules in the purchase of medical supplies and equipment.

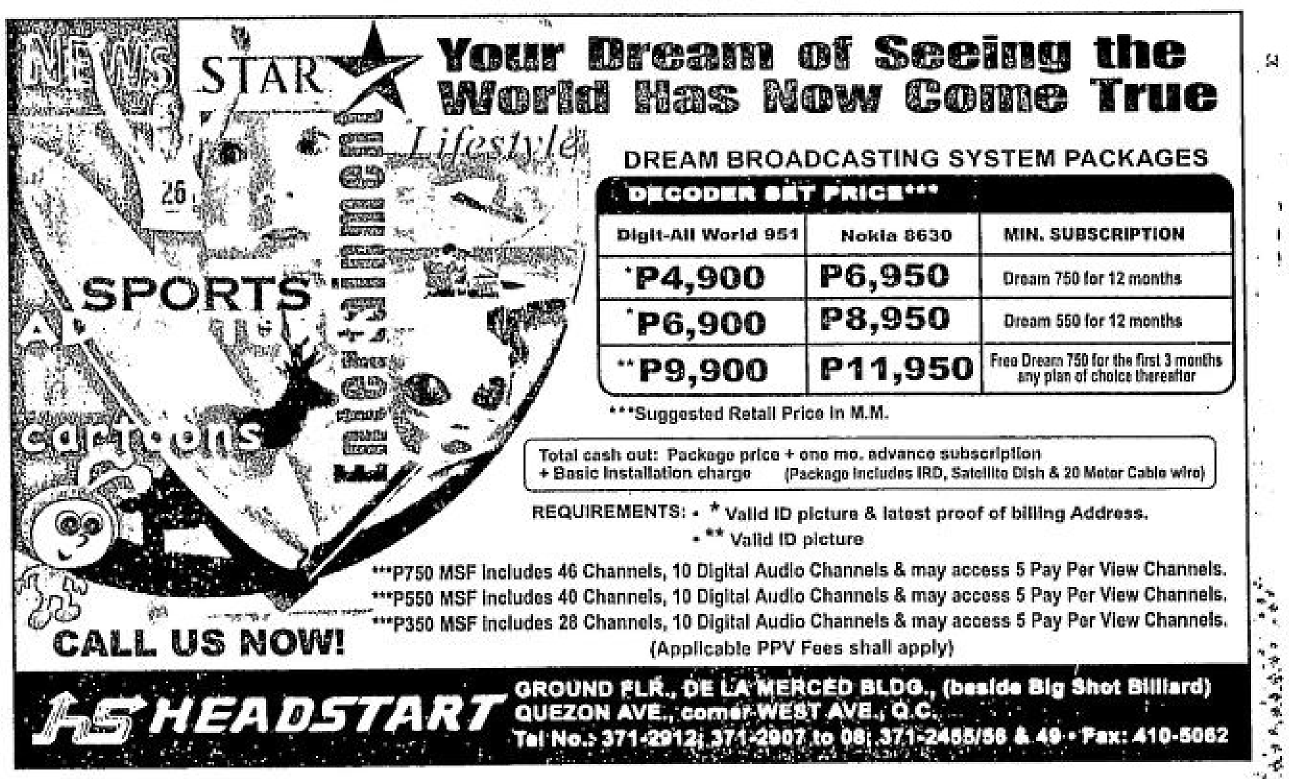
“I will not leave my post until the President or the court asks me to,” Melendres said.

Melendres said that if he allowed himself to be removed through an order from a Palace underling, it would set a precedent for future officials.

But Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said Gaite's order was “perfectly legal.”

“It is a delegated authority (from the President). That is a legal document, he has to comply,” Dayrit said.

When told that Melendres adamantly refused to leave, Dayrit said: “There are ways to handle this matter.” *Armand N. Nocum*



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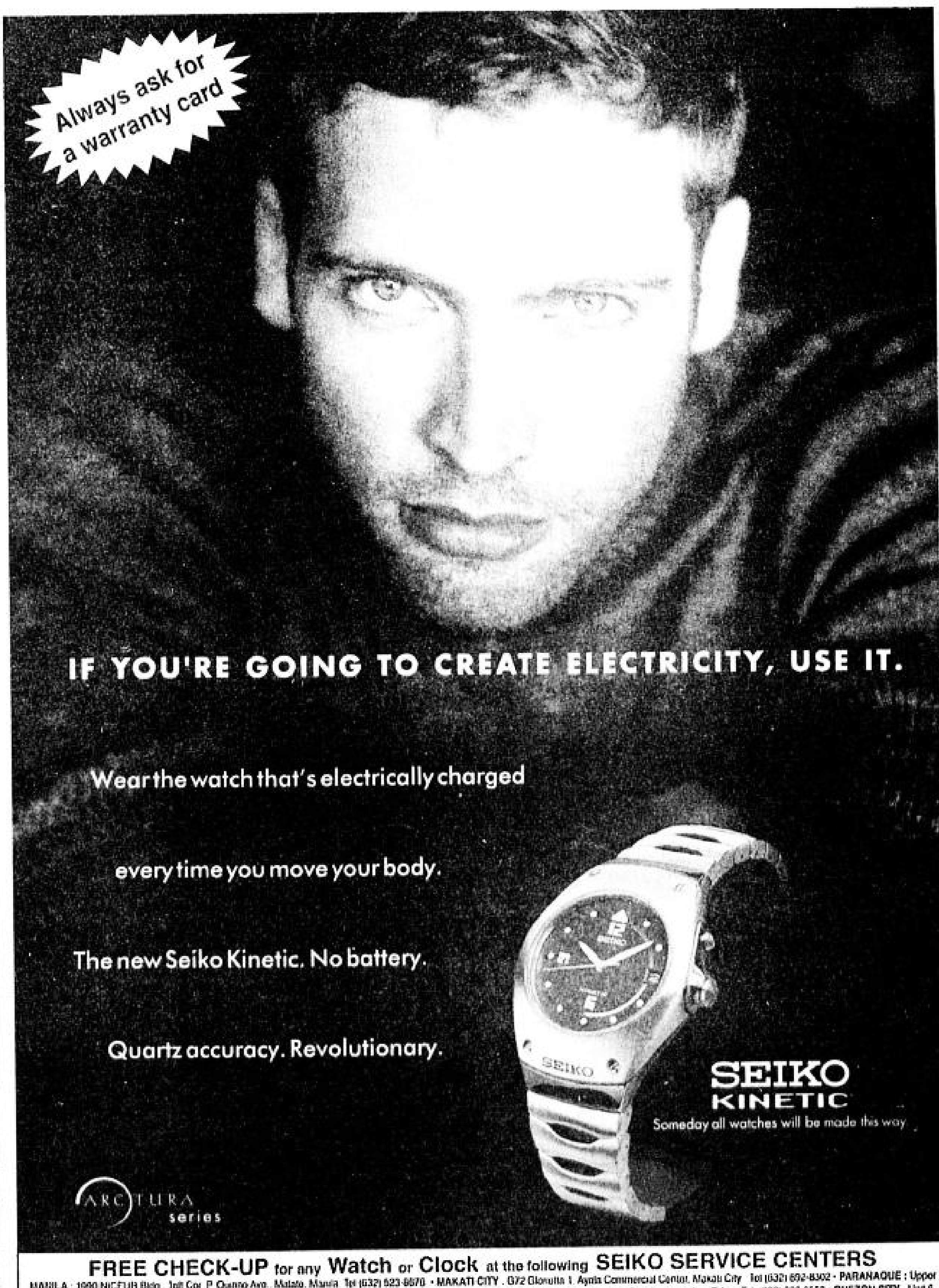

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The code

EDITORIAL

IT is Metro Manila's most talked-about "experiment." For three weeks, the scheme to limit the number of vehicles on the streets of the National Capital Region—still known by the original but now inaccurate name of "color-coding"—has been suspended. The idea is to test a simple hypothesis. Will traffic in Metro Manila, which accounts for 30 percent of the country's gross domestic product, flow faster without the Unified Vehicular Volume Reduction Scheme?

After one week, jeepney and bus drivers think the answer is already clear. Traffic has gotten worse. Their stand is no mere rhetorical flourish; they are paying for it, they say, in the reduced number of trips they can make in a day. Many commuters and car owners, especially those who use the main thoroughfare of Edsa, will side with them. Last week, if anecdotal evidence is any guide, the flow of traffic in many parts of Metro Manila was in fact slower than the week before.

But the Metro Manila Development Authority thinks it is still too early to conclude the experiment. "We gave it three weeks," MMDA Chair and Public Works Secretary Bayani Fernando said over the weekend. "Let's not prejudge the suspension because we're (still) studying the effect."

Deputy MMDA Chair Cesar Lacuna said the first week of the experiment cannot be a true gauge, because that is when motorists are still learning to make the necessary adjustments. "Look at the No Left Turn and No Crossing schemes," he said. "During the first week of (their) implementation, there were a lot of complaints. Later, (the public) saw that (the schemes) worked."

Fernando and Lacuna have a point. The MMDA has taken the unusual step (unusual, that is, for a government agency) of conducting an experiment, of testing an idea in public before turning it into policy. There are systems in place, and it is therefore committed to following through on the process. Perhaps the most critical part of this systematic approach is the continuing traffic count in the region's major intersections, using the MMDA's 36 traffic cameras.

Naturally, political considerations must have been behind the experiment. Faced with mounting pressure from harassed middle-income car owners on one side and from drivers' and operators' associations on the other, Fernando committed the MMDA to the three-week test. The idea was to let the facts dictate the policy, thus providing the government agency precious political cover.

But it may be too much to expect the traffic in Metro Manila to improve overnight or in three weeks from just one experiment, no matter how politically savvy.

For one thing, there is one key variable that needs more testing: the role that Makati City, which chose not to join the suspension, plays in the scheme of things. It may be that areas immediately bordering Makati are suffering traffic jams precisely because of the central business district's decision to continue the color-coding scheme.

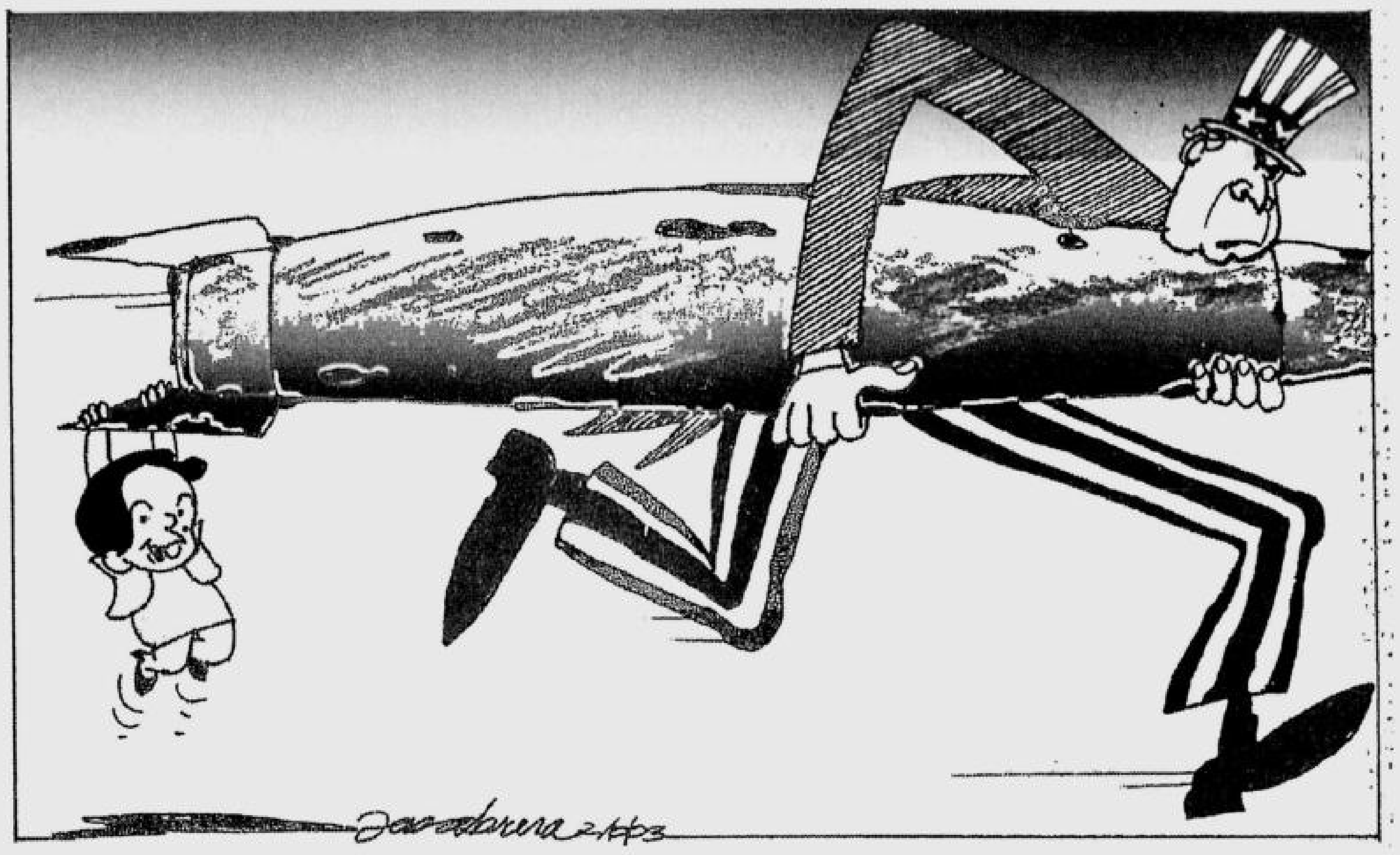
For another, the MMDA's preliminary finding of traffic conditions in Metro Manila estimates that the color-coding scheme reduces the number of vehicles on the road by only 4.5 percent. If there is any positive impact from the suspension, chances are it will be only incremental.

In truth, the solution to the traffic problem lies only partly in the scientific approach, in the systems that Fernando, a building contractor and a three-term reformist mayor of Marikina City, has finally been able to put in place.

The rest of it lies in another, more old-fashioned kind of code: the code of honor. The solution involves following traffic rules and faithfully enforcing them.

"The solution to the traffic problem lies in enforcing traffic rules and not in making motorists bear sacrifices," Manila Mayor Lito Atienza said the other day. "The responsibility of traffic enforcers should be made clear from now on. Enforcement should be consistent, not erratic."

Atienza, too, has a point. But he places the burden of responsibility entirely on the enforcement side. But surely car owners, bus operators, jeepney drivers, commuters and pedestrians alike share the responsibility too. Traffic jams, after all, are often the result of impatient cars blocking the intersection, or buses zigzagging out of lane, or commuters flagging a jeepney in the middle of the street.



A multibillion-peso racket in the Tesda

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

DO you know what Tesda is? If you are not hankering for a job abroad as an entertainer, chances are you don't. If you are, better learn all you can about it before you jump in. And if you have any relative being tempted by recruiters to work abroad on the promise of generous pay, you better read this and get wise.

Tesda stands for Technological Education and Skills Development Authority. It is a government agency mandated to train Overseas Performing Artists (OPAs) and to issue certifications attesting to the talents of the OPAs.

Japan is the preferred deployment of OPAs. Japan's hunger for Filipino entertainers is big. At any given time, there are roughly 50,000 Filipino entertainers working in Japan.

Former Quezon City Rep. Dante Liban is the head of Tesda. Recently, a group that calls itself Parada has charged Liban with causing the decline of the deployment of OPAs. As far as I can gather, this is the situation in Tesda.

Tesda used to be a sham, serving unscrupulous recruiters instead of protecting entertainers.

During the old days, training for Japan-bound entertainers—women preferred—was conducted by a cabal of local recruitment agencies and their Japanese counterparts, talent managers and talent scouts.

The usual preparations for Japan deployment called for applicants to undergo "on-the-job" training in clubs and bars associated with the cabal, where they are actually made to work as GROs or "guest relations officers," the polite term for hostesses who entertain customers. The training normally lasts five months, shorter if Japanese clients call for rush deployment.

During their so-called "training," the applicants, mostly provincial lasses, are given board and lodging by the recruiter. Not for free. Recruiters charge something like P75,000 for "taking care" of an applicant for five months. The money would be deducted from their initial pay upon contract signing. On signing up with a Japanese club, the talent normally receives US$1,900, but ends up with virtually nothing after the commissions of recruiters, managers and scouts, and the payment of board and lodging.

Over and above the deductions, recruits are made to pay from P25,000 to P50,000 for the "Artist's Record Book," (ARB), a basic requirement for deployment that certifies to the "talent" of the holder.

Once deployed, OPAs get only about one-fourth of their contract prices, the bulk of their earnings going to their recruiters.

It is common knowledge that a great many of the OPAs ended up as slaves of prostitution rings in Japan. The above irregularities could have been possible only with the connivance of Tesda insiders.

Under reforms instituted by Liban, Tesda now makes sure that talents are indeed trained and certified as talents, and that they would do the country proud in the countries where they work.

To be deployed, OPA wannabes must go through a series of talent tests. Their performances are taped for record purposes. But if an applicant appeals to a Japanese scout but is not up to par as a performer, the person grading her gets a signal and he or she gives her a passing grade. At other times, an experienced performer doubles as the applicant. Naturally, she passes the test, and the applicant gets the passing grade. It is easy to spot if the performer is a double: the videotape is taken in long shots. No close-ups so that the difference in facial features will not be noticed.

When Liban took over, he instituted reforms to prevent these irregularities. From the ranks of the academe, the TV-movie industry and the entertainment sector, Liban tapped testing administrators and testing officers to implement the reforms in the assessment and accreditation of OPAs—from registration of applicants, to actual testing of talents claimed, all the way to submission of test results to Tesda.

Testing officers are called to duty and asked to confirm their availability on the night before the actual testing, and advised on the venue of the testing just two hours before the schedule, leaving them neither opportunity nor time to interact with applicants.

But there's a downside to Liban's reforms. What Liban's detractors say—that deployment of OPAs is declining—is true. Prior to the reforms, the passing rate of OPA applicants is 95 percent. When the reforms were instituted, the passing rate went down to only 55 percent.

Needless to say, the high 95 percent passing rate was achieved under obviously dubious circumstances, while the 55 percent reflects true talents picked by a credible system that also assures deployment to decent jobs. When a recruit, who can't sing and dance reaches Japan, she is forced by her employer to become a prostitute.

Under the reforms, recruiters and talent managers and scouts have absolutely nothing to do with the assessment and accreditation of OPAs. That means the syndicates have been neutralized.

The syndicates are therefore furious at Liban for billions of reasons. The percentage drop in OPA deployment translates to around 20,000 applicants failing OPA tests and assessments in the five months that the reforms have been in place. It is estimated that the syndicates lost some P4 billion in commissions and other charges that they would have slapped on the 20,000 failures who would have passed the tests under the old system. Liban is at war against a multibillion-peso racket.

Impeach her

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

I KNOW I was one of those who thought Linda Montayre was doing the country a disservice seeking the impeachment of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. My reason for it being that elections were just a year away, and it wouldn't do to rock this country to its roots again, which would only make for more instability and uncertainty.

I know I was one of those who praised GMA for announcing she wasn't going to run in 2004 and proclaimed my willingness to help her "caretaker government" unite the country under the banners of reform. Though I also remember making a caveat to that, which was that I would do so only if she hewed to the vision of Edsa II.

I am taking all these back. In fact, I am going further and—addressing in particular Kompil, Pagbabago and the other groups purporting to keep the spirit of Edsa alive—calling for her impeachment here and now. The words Nelson Mandela used to describe George Bush were "lacking in foresight" and "a president who cannot think properly." The only words I can think of in describing GMA are "unfit to rule" and "a president who cannot think at all."

The danger is grave and imminent, and it is not coming from any terrorist, real or imagined, it is coming from GMA, full-blown and frightening. You do not have to go far to see how her position thwarts the spirit of Edsa. She has gone against the will of everyone who contributed to Edsa II. That includes the activists and NGOs, who fought the tyranny from the start; the congressmen who turned prosecutors in the impeachment trial and faced up to great odds to defend justice; the senators who listened with an open mind and had the courage to stand by their beliefs; Jaime Cardinal Sin and Corazon Aquino, who helped summon the legions to Edsa; the men and women of this country who made immense sacrifices to get a crack at a better future.

They are all calling on the world to heed the United Nations rather than the United States. GMA is not.

Rumor has it that GMA is taking this gamble in the hope of being able to turn back on her vow not to run again. In the hope of having the crown offered to her by sycophants and reluctantly agreeing, like Julius Caesar, to accept it. In the hope, in particular, of courting the American favor, enough for them to say this country cannot have a better president, who should therefore stay on for another six years. Whether true or not, I do not care. The threat she poses is not later, it is now. What monumental irony that the one person who never took any risk to become president, keeping to the shadows to avoid being in harm's way, would risk the entire country for her own reasons, strutting in the limelight to shove the country into the line of fire. Well, cowards are always courageous with other people's lives.

Teofisto Guingona and Raul Roco, two pillars of the impeachment trial, have already spoken out against the war. Cardinal Sin has already spoken out against the war. The Edsa II coalition, which is the ruling coalition in the Senate, has already spoken out against the war. GMA will not listen.

She says she is convinced by the case Bush, or Colin Powell, has put forward. So? If Bush, or Powell, said the earth was flat, she would find compelling evidence to believe it as well. No, more than that, she would take it as gospel truth, a proposition wrapped in ironclad proof, and preach it to a disbelieving world.

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes says not to worry, the President has not really made up her mind yet, and "anyway she has assured the nation that any action she will take will consider the national interest." What a stupid thing to say. GMA said last week: "It should be clear to all that the responsibility to avoid conflict rests with the Iraqi leadership. The UN should be ready to act with dispatch and force when required. Otherwise, it will lose its credibility as a force for peace." That is not taking a position?

Where is the national interest in turning the 1.5 million OFWs in the Middle East into objects of enmity by their hosts? Where is the national interest in turning the Filipinos abroad into potential targets of terrorist attacks, along with the Americans, British and Australians? Where is the national interest in turning all the Filipinos, here or abroad, into the laughingstock of the world?

I saw a foreign undersecretary, whose name I do not recall, say on TV that we stand to reap terrorist attacks whether we join the war against Iraq or not. What an even more idiotic thing to say. Had he done his homework, he would have realized that most of the world does not see the war as being anti-Iraq, it sees the war as being anti-Arab. Proof of that are the American surveys themselves that show anti-American sentiment to have grown steeply in the Arab countries, including Turkey, where the United States hopes to launch its attack on Iraq.

Indeed, never mind national interest. Where is the morality in joining a war that is being damned by everyone from Willie Nelson to Nelson Mandela, from Jiminy Cricket to Jimmy Carter, from pop stars to the Pope?

Time is running out—on the nation. Never mind that the country stands to be horrendously devastated by the loss of a job market in the Middle East. Think only of the horrendous devastation to the families of the OFWs in the Middle East, who have to fend off the thought that their sons and daughters and mothers and fathers could lose their lives. My opposition to the impeachment move against GMA was that it would produce more instability and uncertainty in this country. But better more instability and uncertainty than the certainty this country will be unhinged from its roots and plunge to the precipice. GMA doesn't heed the voice of reason, and fast, there is only one thing to do: Impeach her.

* * *

Comments to dequiros@vasia.com

Abalos has to try out all alternatives

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

COMELEC Chair Benjamin Abalos is getting peeved at Namfrel for being on his back constantly, but his sentiments cannot hide the fact that there are some very big discrepancies in figures the Comelec and Namfrel are quoting. He has to explain it fully. For instance, reports cited him as saying the Comelec will need some P450 million for transmission equipment to send precinct returns direct from the counting machines located in the various municipalities, to the Comelec headquarters in Manila. For this Abalos wants to invest P450 million primarily to lease satellite facilities. But Namfrel's secretary general, Guillermo Luz, says that the very same transmission can be done for only P5 million by utilizing existing communication facilities of PLDT, Globe, Bayan-Tel and mobile phone systems. Namfrel says it has been utilizing them in all the quick counts it has conducted in various elections.

* * *

Between the Comelec and Namfrel's quotations is P445 million; that's a lot of money and Abalos has to prove to us taxpayers that he cannot use this P5-million scheme. Has he reckoned with other communication alternatives to his P450-million scheme? It is sensible to use existing facilities. This country has come a long way in communications and we journalists are witness to it. We now send our columns and stories by modem using only the cell phone almost anywhere in the Philippines. The experts point out that the few areas where no adequate communication facilities exist have only about 75,000 voters. Concentrating on these areas shouldn't cost P450 million. Then too, what happens after the Comelec uses the P450 million worth of machines after the election? Will they rot again in some bodega? Abalos has to convince the taxpayers that he is exploring all ways to combine economy with efficiency in election transmittals.

* * *

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando has lifted the color-coding system in Metro Manila for a few weeks in order to study whether it could be done away with for good. What we saw here since then, however, was that traffic has become so snarled, since families now move out several vehicles at the same time. The terrible traffic situation has caused many citizens to ask Fernando to return the old odd-even system. The fact is that we have come to live with it and have adjusted to it already. It has induced discipline among us. Let's go back to it, BF.

* * *

At last week's voting on the Tancangco impeachment case in the House, the majority of the Spice Boys rose to the challenge and voted with the intrepid bloc of 57 to push for investigation of the impeachment complaint against Commissioner Luz Tancangco. Those who voted in this group were Representatives Rolando Andaya Jr. of Camarines Sur, Magtanggol Gunigundo Jr. of Bulacan, Edmundo Reyes of Marinduque, and Miguel Zubiri of Bukidnon. In fact Zubiri opined to this columnist with regret that if the voting had been held the next day, as agreed upon, the requisite 73 votes would have been met handily, thus sending back to the justice committee its report that threw out the impeachment complaint. Regrettably, the only Spice Boy who voted with the bloc of 69 to exonerate Tancangco was Rep. Ace Barbers of Surigao del Norte.

On the other hand, a certified member of the "Old Spice" bloc, Iloilo Rep. Narciso Monfort, at first questioned whether the House members' decision for or against the committee report would have any bearing at all since it was obvious that the 73 votes couldn't be mustered that night. But in the end the fiery white-haired lawmaker followed his conscience and voted for investigation.

* * *

A few weeks ago this column wrote that former Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office general manager Ricardo Golpeo was hired by industrialist Eduardo Cojuangco, chair of the Nationalist People's Coalition, to work for him, reporting at San Miguel Corp. and United Coconut Planters Bank. I wrote that Golpeo's job is to go around the country to organize for Sen. Panfilo Lacson's presidential campaign, as funded by Cojuangco. Since then both SMC and UCPB have written to the letters' section here that there is no official record that Golpeo is employed at both places, and now Golpeo himself wrote to "vehemently deny that I have been going around the country to organize Sen. Panfilo Lacson's or anybody's presidential campaign." But despite these denials, my source insists his info is very reliable.

* * *

For Marian scholars and devotees of the Blessed Virgin Mary, foremost Jesuit theologian Catalino G. Arevalo, S.J., will deliver a lecture on Mary to celebrate the 15th anniversary of Pope John Paul II's encyclical, "Redemptoris Mater," this Wednesday, Feb. 12, at 10 a.m. up to 12 noon at the Loyola School of Theology (LST), Ateneo University campus, QC. The public is invited.

Notice of Father Arevalo's lecture on Mary came from my Carmelite friends from the Monastery of St. Therese in Gilmore, QC, who feel that in these highly troubled times "we truly need to reinvigorate our faith in the intercessory power of Our Lady." The Carmelites also said their book on their Diamond Jubilee Lecture Series of 2001 would be available at the LST talk of Father Arevalo, who perhaps might be coaxed to autograph his talk in 2001, which is now part of the book. The 2001 Carmel lecture series was participated in by highly respected intellectual leaders who spoke on various religious as well as non-sectarian topics, and held in 12 universities in Metro Manila throughout 2001 as a way to help arouse the college and university students to feel deeply responsible for the country's future. The book, which sells at P250 for the soft cover and P350 for hard cover, was put together and edited by former UP president Dr. Jose V. Abueva, who chaired the executive committee of the Carmelites' Diamond Jubilee.

Makeovers

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Carlos Isagani T. Zarate

HAVING stayed for quite sometime in the United States, *balikbayan* lawyer Cecil Jover-Angeles was "horrified" to see the state of disrepair of the Aquino Hall of Justice in Davao City, which she described as a "dinghy, dusty, cramped, dark and dreary public hall." In a letter to the local chapter of the Integrated Bar, Cecil exhorts that Davao City, being a premier city of Mindanao, "deserves a clean, well-lighted and functioning structure that will command respect and awe for the institution it represents."

A two-building, three-story edifice, the Hall of Justice houses the seven branches of the Metropolitan Trial Court in Cities, the 10 branches of the Regional Trial Court, the City Prosecution Office, the Public Attorney's Office, the Regional State Prosecution Office, the Register of Deeds, the Parole and Probation Office, the IBP and the offices of the Clerks of Court.

The construction of the Hall of Justice more than a decade ago was met with relief, not only by the legal community, but by the public as well, for it virtually placed under one roof the then scattered offices mostly located in rented and dilapidated structures. Yet, only a few years after its completion, the excitement dissipated after structural defects started to show—leaking roofs, peeling tiles, poorly ventilated rooms, busted pipes in comfort rooms that sometimes run out of water, and so on. Not to mention that most of the courtrooms are small, there are no holding areas for detention prisoners and there is no law library, among other things.

With the hundreds, if not thousands of transactions, taking place daily in the Hall of Justice, it is one of the busiest government buildings in the city, maybe next, if not equal, to City Hall. Every once in a while, repairs have been made. But, just the same, its dismal state became more apparent day in and day out for those who occupy and transact business in its various offices. This somehow affects the efficient and effective administration of justice.

Where lies the problem? Over-centralized management and inattention given to its upkeep could be some of the culprits. At present, not only procurement of supplies and other needs of the various courts are centralized, even the budget for the janitorial services of the Hall of Justice must also be approved in Manila.

"But we really try our best to operate within the limited budget and resources given to us," said RTC Executive Judge Virginia Hofilena-Europa, whose responsibilities include the supervision of the Hall of Justice. "It may be far from ideal but we're so much blessed compared to other areas, even like those in Manila." But, physically, the present Hall of Justice no longer meets the needs of a big and fast-growing city like Davao, she admitted.

This fact though is not unbeknownst to the Supreme Court, which could also be the reason why it chose Davao City as one of the six pilot areas throughout the country for its Judicial Support Reform Project. One component of the project is the construction of "model courts" that will meet the changing needs of "society while at the same time maintaining the institutional integrity of the court."

A Supreme Court-commissioned study design, presented during a recent seminar attended by judges and other stakeholders, recommends the construction of a seven-story modern building with a "classical touch." The proposed new complex, while maintaining the two-building design, is enveloped with the modern green slightly tempered glass panels, "symboliz(ing) transparency in the functions of the court." It also included a proposed eight-meter atrium "topped off with a new domed acrylic plexi-glass and steel reinforced skylight system" to replace the present dimly lit and overcrowded entry lobby.

But, more importantly, the study also recommends the decentralization of the administration with the establishment of the Regional Court Administrator's Office, which, among others, will directly supervise the pilot courts and their personnel. On top of a new edifice, this recommendation is probably the most welcome among those who attended the Supreme Court-initiated seminar. "It will make the delivery of services and the administration of justice more efficient and timely," Judge Europa acknowledged.

If this Davao project, expected to be completed by the end of 2004, pushes through, will the "horrified" reactions be replaced with praise and awe? Of course, there are other factors that derail the effective administration of justice, yet this "reform" albeit physical in nature, we hope may lead to other much-needed reforms in the judicial system as well.

Although, I venture to warn that one should not expect too much. Larger concerns like the absence of genuine judicial autonomy may again hamper whatever reforms are initiated by the high court. Although in principle a co-equal branch of the executive and legislative, the judiciary's self-governance, in such areas as fiscal autonomy, is sometimes impeded by the "interference" of the two other branches. Indeed, it is appalling to think that the AFP has a bigger budget than the judiciary which only gets less than one percent of the entire national budget. And more appalling is the thought that an executive of the SSS receives a higher pay than the Chief Justice, or that a clerk of the GSIS is better paid than a judge.

It's high time, too, that a serious makeover must be made on these larger concerns.

* * *

Comments to karlos_z23@hotmail.com or kar_laws@yahoo.com

A sign from heaven, or a tragedy misused?

COMMENTARY

Dean Jorge Bocobo

I WATCHED Columbia fall. I wept as Columbia fell.

How long it seemed to take, for that burning fireball, caught in gravity's well, to reach the earth, and merciful God, be extinguished, within in its dark embrace. Those seven died in spectacle, so we might look again at Nature, with old humility and new respect.

Space shuttle Columbia's smouldering remains were still being sought by heavy-hearted searchers in Bush's home state of Texas, but in superstitious Philippines, the tragedy was already being pressed into the service of international politics. One writer agreed with Vice President Teofisto Guingona after they watched it on TV—Columbia's fall is a "bad omen for America," and "a way for the heavens to warn US President George W. Bush against starting a war" on Saddam Hussein. The text chatter that day was similarly ghoulish, reflective of insensitive and flippant natures.

Terrestrial cameras spotted her first at 220,000 feet above the earth, plunging at 20 times the speed of sound, descending like Tennyson's eagle, but with the left wing, broken. She was a meteoric fireball in supersonic free fall, plummeting so fast, she outran the very sound waves of her fiery disintegration.

So in life, Columbia's voyagers were just little-known scientists, doctors, teachers and members of families, but in death, they are famous antiwar props, bad omens to show how "American technological might" has been laid low by a vengeful God, because of America's hubris and warmongering. What a cosmic crab mentality we have.

Those who say that Columbia's tragedy was a sign from God, describe a God I do not recognize. Theirs, is a terroristic God, (maybe Beelzebub on Angel's Dust), one who incinerates innocent human beings, in billion-dollar catastrophes, broadcast live on CNN, just to send a message or a warning to the political leaders they do not like. Couldn't their God be more direct with Bush and less homicidal with innocent astronauts?

Hammer blows of burning air, like the claws of invisible velociraptors, unzipped her ceramic skin, until, untiled and bare, they broke her titanium bones, tore her limb from aluminum limb, scattering her pulverized precious cargo into the trembling atmosphere. The astronauts in her exploded womb all fell asleep in Columbia's dream.

How disappointing that superstition, with a great flapping of wings and feelings, should so easily excuse a voluntary strangling of reason in some of our best people. It seems there are no limits to the propaganda that may be employed out of a love for peace. As if peace were ever unmated from the truth! Even an admission to being giddily irrational, or temporarily insane, because of the magnitude of this tragedy, or the coming tragedy of war, cannot justify passing off superstitious musings as public discourse.

Accidents discover the continents of our ignorance. But we cannot conquer them unless we uphold truthfulness and intellectual honesty. Evil men will only exploit the fertile ground of ignorance that we prepare for them with the hoe of superstition, the unserious, the inane, the flippantly untrue. These apocryphal habits of mind in Filipinos, have never built a flying machine, or a nation.

Near the end, Columbia was a ghostly, streaking hare, chased by the wolves of her own debris. Her melting hull was skywriting her epitaph in the blue expanse of air. Racing to terminal velocity, to the finish line on earth, she was overtaken there, by the Tortoise, which followed slowly, but surely, close behind, bearing Columbia's disembodied voice, the very last parts of her to land, those dirge-like sonic booms, that will echo long, in humanity's memory and esteem. But man will resume the ancient ascent where Columbia has fallen.

The state of impending war in the world, does not justify a state of war on reason and logic in our conversations about it, no matter how much disagreement or passion is in them. Superstition and the willingness to wallow in stupidity have never served the causes of nationalism or social justice or international peace, only those of hatred and violence.

Well-respected and well-loved, Vice President Guingona, nonetheless deepens the black hole of blind historical resentment, over our truly unjust and cruel past, that many Filipinos fall into, but never come out of. Some Filipinos find validation for a permanent culture of protest and anti-Americanism in Guingona's valiant, gallant, old-fashioned rage-against-the-dying-of-the-light kind of nationalism. I respect and admire that. But I disagree with his continuing filibuster against his own President, using an evangelizing victimhood, steadfastly opposing her policies of engagement with America on the basis of old grievances and new suspicions.

Maybe it is time to reimagine the possibilities. Throughout the 20th century, we see an America that fought horrible wars against heavyweight contenders for the right to define the next century: Germany, Italy, Japan, China, Russia. Yet these enemies of hers, despite a century of "American aggression, imperialism and hegemony" are hardly America's downtrodden subjugates today, oppressed and destroyed, are they?

But in this century, America must do for her friends, like the Philippines, at least what she has done for her enemies in the last, for she owes us, big time. We can make her do that, we must make her do that, because there are already four million Filipino reasons that permanently unite the fates and fortunes of our two nations together. The globalizing force of the Filipino diaspora is the greatest challenge to Filipino nationalism: evolve or perish.

* * *

Comments to deanjbocobo@yahoo.com

Misinterpreted newspaper gambit

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

ONCE in a while, the editorial staff of the INQUIRER deviates from the traditional layout of the newspaper to break the monotony of its pages. Looking for the arrangement of text and photos that will immediately catch the readers' attention is a challenge most editors enjoy.

When something similar was done on the front page of the Jan. 13 issue of the INQUIRER, Tricia Oriel of Cainta, Rizal, took offense. Let me describe first how that page looks so you will understand the context of the reader's complaint.

The big story for that day was President Macapagal-Arroyo's announcement that the Philippine economy grew by 4.6 percent last year, the highest since the 1997 economic crisis. Fittingly, the banner read "Highest growth since '97."

Directly underneath the headline was a photo of the President taken during the 12th anniversary celebration of the Philippine National Police in Camp Crame. She was shown with her head tilted upward while key PNP officials stood behind her. Her legs were spread a little apart, with the left foot up in the air, as she was about to go down the stairs. The eyes of her security aides were focused on her feet.

In what may be considered a touch of irony to the principal news report, on top of the headline, was a photo of Filipino workers from Kuwait who were coming home to avoid getting caught in the expected attack of the United States on Iraq.

The reader said the picture of the President is "embarrassing enough, but for a national newspaper to post it on its front page is more embarrassing. I think it is the height of immaturity whenever your newspaper posts pictures of prominent personalities in their most unflattering position.

"Let's stick to the issues please. If you're not in favor of the President, or anyone, present facts. Don't show disgust through immature reporting such as what you have done."

Packaging

The editor in chief took exception to the reader's statement that the photo was meant to embarrass the President. She said that picture was chosen because the President's smiling face appeared to be looking at the headline about the country's unexpected economic growth in 2002. It projected the image of our national leader holding her head up high to show satisfaction with the results of last year's economic activities despite the numerous social and economic problems that have hit the country.

It was a case of packaging or matching the main front-page photo with the most important news of the day. The editor in chief recalled that the news about the surprising result was originally scheduled to be announced by Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri.

The President was so happy with the report that she immediately called a press conference and made the announcement herself. She even allowed herself to be interviewed by the media reporters, something she hadn't done for quite some time since she ended the weekly press briefings she used to give during the early part of her administration.

The editor in chief did not find anything wrong with the photo showing one of the President's legs slightly up in the air and her aides looking at her feet. That is a natural position for anybody who is about to go down the stairs. And it is only logical for her aides to focus their eyes on her feet to make sure they can catch her in case she slips.

Good photo

I agree that no malice was intended in the photo complained of.

The matching of the news and photo made the front page more vibrant. It was as if the headline flowed down to the main photo. The picture was a welcome break from the usual shots of the President during commemorative occasions delivering a speech behind a podium, or trooping the line or pinning medals on some awardees.

Frankly, I enjoy seeing "newspaper tricks" in the INQUIRER and other newspapers. It takes a lot of imagination to be able to blend photos with the news without sacrificing precious editorial space or making the page look like a pictorial rather than a source of relevant news.

Digital technology may be a big help in doing this process, but at the end of the day it is still the creative juices of the editors that determine the quality or effectivity of the blending of news and photos.

They have to draw on their artistic talents to be able to decide how to position the photos, where to put the accompanying news report and what shade of color to use to make those two items stand out from the rest of the page. All these have to be completed before the deadline to put the newspaper to bed comes.

Plagiarized photos

On a related issue, the publisher of the INQUIRER has asked me to bring to the public's attention the newspaper's policy on the use or reproduction of its photos. It is unfortunate that these photos have been copied or printed on T-shirts, calendars, writing pads, video cassette tapes and other commercial products without prior permission of the newspaper.

For instance, the INQUIRER's dramatic photo in last year's UAAP basketball championship games showing an Ateneo cager blocking what could have been the victory-clinching shot of a La Sallite was used on the cover of a commemorative product for the sports event.

The reproduction was unauthorized. The photo was lifted from the front page and, with the aid of digital technology, transferred to the product in question. The act clearly violated the INQUIRER's copyright over the photo. The party who committed the offense can be held liable for damages under our intellectual property laws.

The publisher stressed that the newspaper will not hesitate to publish the names and addresses of the parties who use, copy or reproduce the photos of the INQUIRER without its prior written authorization. If the violation persists, the newspaper will not hesitate to seek judicial remedy to protect its proprietary rights over the intellectual products of its staff.

Fair warning to those who may be inclined to plagiarize the contents of the INQUIRER.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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No longer hostage to politics

WHEN President Macapagal-Arroyo announced last Dec. 30 her decision not to seek the presidency in 2004, she gave the impression that, no longer hostage to the imperatives of day-to-day politics, she would henceforth focus her efforts on solving the nation's basic problems: poverty, graft and corruption, and peace and order.

But what has she done so far?

First, she revamped her Cabinet but the revamp is unfocused: Rigoberto Tiglao from spokesperson to chief of staff; Ignacio Bunye from press secretary to spokesperson; Hernani Braganza from agrarian reform to press secretary; Roberto Pagdanganan from cooperatives to agrarian reform; Luis Lorenzo from agriculture adviser to agriculture secretary. These movements created a lot of fury in certain quarters but, in the light of the President's new focus, they signify nothing.

Second, she pressed for the enactment of the Transco bill, the anti-money laundering bill, the securitization bill, the absentee voting bill, the special purpose vehicle bill, etc. Some of these measures will hugely benefit transnational corporations and their local partners at the expense of the Filipino people.

Third, unpreceded by any preparatory work, she made English the medium of instruction. This shock treatment may work on Erap's arthritis but a wholesale shift in the medium of teaching cannot be achieved through faith healing.

Fourth, she ordered a gun ban, the ban immediately applicable even to those duly licensed to own and carry guns. However, the criminals in and out of the police and the military remain armed.

Fifth, she distributed P1-million checks to Cebu mayors, an act which conjures up a candidate for office.

Finally, she visited Filipino workers in Kuwait to show her concern for their safety but soon thereafter she endorsed President Bush's war on Iraq. If the safety of the Filipino workers in Kuwait and elsewhere in the Middle East is her priority, she ought to be for peace, not for war, no matter what Bush says.

My unsolicited advice: Madam President, please don't get derailed from your Dec. 30 commitment and pursue as soon as possible your Jan. 10 announcement to shield our manufacturing from unbridled globalization.

—AMADO GAT INCIONG,
Unit 301 Union Square
Condominium,
145 15th Ave., Cubao, Quezon City

Setting the record straight on Arroceros Forest Park

THIS is to set the record straight about what happened on Feb. 4, at the Forest Park in Arroceros Street as well as other things in the controversy surrounding the park.

The demonstrators that laid siege on the gates of the park Tuesday numbered far fewer than the reported 250.

And we, the builders and caretakers of the park (by virtue of a Memorandum of Agreement reached with the city government before Mayor Jose Atienza took over), were not having a private picnic there, as reported. In fact, we had invited news people precisely to announce the opening of the park to the public and to clarify issues on the controversy. We did have food for our guests and ourselves, but we kept the park open to everyone, as we have done at daytime every day (except Monday) since last week.

Representatives of Manila public school teachers came visiting, giving us a chance to talk with them and try to reconcile our interests. The teachers have been made to believe by Mayor Atienza that he will build dormitories and other facilities for them at the park, a project that will naturally require cutting or otherwise removing trees there, in violation of the agreement. Some of the teachers were indeed insistent on a proprietary claim on the park—a claim that itself has dubious legal validity—but other teachers conceded the greater public interest in our fight to save the park and all the 3,500 life-sustaining trees there.

It was in the middle of our meeting that the demonstrators descended. The teachers told us they had nothing to do with the demonstration or knew any of the demonstrators. The demonstrators themselves were confused about their cause: while some did express their support for the teachers' claim, others were claiming the park for themselves, as a site of their own future homes, invoking, again, a promise from the mayor.

Indeed, it is reasonable to suspect they had been sent by the mayor: some of them were delivered and collected in an unmistakably marked city government van and all of them supplied lunch—and later on even chairs—from the same van (SEY 567).

We tried to reason with them and even invited them in for a stroll, a pleasure open to everyone else; after all, it is everybody's park and we only happen to be its caretakers.

The demonstrators demanded, rather, that we leave right then. And the police, who had appeared curiously at the same moment they did, and one Jed Pateraso, who presented himself as a Radio ng Bayan reporter, advised us to do as the demonstrators' said—"for your own safety." But we stood our ground until the park's closing time—at 5 p.m.

Toward the hour the demonstrators' ranks thinned, we ourselves prepared to go. But after the gates closed behind us, a man came to padlock the gates from the outside, locking us out and the whole park-loving public, and locking in our sole resident parkkeeper, who later in the evening had to be rescued with a ladder for his own safety. As we write you, the gates remain padlocked, the park unguarded and the newly planted trees that need sensitive care unattended. The gates were opened earlier yesterday (Feb. 5) but only to let some City Hall-contracted workers in.

—REGINA PATERNO, president,
Winner Foundation,
The Orchidarium, Orosa Street
corner P. Burgos Drive,
Rizal Park, Manila

LETTERS

A grant, not a loan

ALLOW us to clarify recent news reports on the approval of a $10.8-million fund from the World Bank Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, to help finance the country's programs to stop the manufacture and use of ozone-depleting substances (ODS).

The fund is a grant, not a loan as earlier reported.

Through this crucial grant, the Philippines will be able to implement programs under the Philippine National CFC Phase-out Plan (NCPP) in compliance with the country's commitment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, calling for a total ban on chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) by 2010.

The approval of the grant signifies the international community's renewed trust and confidence that the Macapagal administration is committed to the global movement to eradicate the use of harmful substances that destroy the ozone layer.

ODS such as CFCs are chemical substances known to slowly deplete the ozone layer, allowing the entry of lethal ultraviolet rays. CFCs are used mainly as active ingredients in aerosols and sprays, in the production of foam cushioning, as well as cooling agents in refrigerators and air conditioners.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is now gearing up to fight this global war against ODS in the local front. In fact, a five-day "National Train the Trainers Course for Customs Officers and Other Key Stakeholders on Monitoring and Control of ODS and Compliance under the other Multilateral Environmental Agreements" was held at the Clark Special Economic Zone in Angeles, Pampanga, under the auspices of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP).

The trainers course, organized by UNEP with the DENR's Philippine Ozone Desk under the Environmental Management Bureau, seeks to train customs officers and other concerned government agencies to control, monitor and apprehend the import and export of CFCs and other ODS.

—IRMA S. PAULME
OIC-director, Public Affairs Office,
DENR, Visayas Ave., Diliman, QC

No more part in US wars

AS we pass along the Pinaglabanan Bridge in San Juan, we will find a marker that recalls how Private William Grayson of the First Nebraska Volunteers, fired the shot that started the Filipino-American War at around 9 p.m. of Feb. 4, 1899. It was a war that we ought not to forget in the face of continuing war crimes and rising militarism as the US aggressively expands its economic, political, military and cultural domination of the world.

More than a hundred years later, America's policymakers are rushing to declare a war on Iraq amid massive anti-war demonstrations in the United States and around the globe. Thousands of US troops are now deployed in the Middle East, the Philippines and other countries whose sovereignty and security are violated in the name of the United States' "war on terror." The latest State of the Union Address of US President George W. Bush was a virtual declaration of war on Iraq.

It is outrageous that capitalist greed for oil and other strategic resources in the Middle East, Asia and the whole world drives the United States to ignore our appeals for peace. Globally, the United States rakes in billions in profit out of its wars and so-called globalization schemes while the people are left to die and suffer. There is no peace in the face of massive destruction of lives, property and the future of generations to come.

Historically, we can see that the US superpower is really the No. 1 international terrorist. In the memory of over half a million Filipinos who died in the 1899 Filipino-American War and of the millions who died in Vietnam, Korea, Latin America and other US colonies, we say: No to US wars of aggression! We demand that the Macapagal administration stop the Philippines' involvement in the US war on Iraq and all acts of US intervention and terrorism in the Philippines and other nations. Let us take to heart the pleading of Pope John Paul II to make a choice so that humanity can still have a future.

Moreover, the US-instigated listing of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army and Jose Maria Sison as "terrorists" since August 2002, imposed a great hurdle to the resumption of formal peace talks between the government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front (NDF). As peace and human rights advocates, we also demand the removal of the CPP-NPA and Sison in the list of "terrorists" in order to rebuild confidence and restore a favorable atmosphere for the resumption of formal GRP-NDF peace talks.

—REV. FR. ALLAN JOSE
ARCEBUCHE, OFM, spokesperson,
Promotion of Church People's
Response, 3/F NCCP, 879 Edsa,
Quezon City 1101

PhilHealth not losing investments

THIS is in reaction to Neal Cruz's column last Jan. 30. The Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth) was included in the rundown of government financial institutions whose finances are reportedly on the losing end.

We wish to inform you that PhilHealth did not exactly lose in its investment in Fort Bonifacio. Our investment with Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. (FBDC) as servicer, carried a yield of 15 percent per annum, payable in five years. It was covered by pledged interest-bearing receivables of FBDC worth P1.2 billion and collateral consisting of properties worth 200 percent of the principal amount invested.

Since we invested in it in December 1999 and until April 2002, actual interest payments made has already totaled to P338 million, an amount that is definitely advantageous to the government, considering the difficult economic situation the country is in right now.

Should Cruz be interested in details of this matter, we will be willing to sit down with him soon. We can be reached at 638-3080 or at sly8296@hotmail.com.

—LINDA B. LAURETA,
manager, Corporate
Communications
Office, Philippine
Health Insurance
Corp., City State
Centre, 709 Shaw
Blvd., Pasig City

DepEd-Manila really needs Arroceros property

THIS is to clarify some points regarding the Department of Education-Manila building to be constructed at the Forest Park, Arroceros, Manila.

"On this site will rise DepEd-Manila Building!" This is the sign posted in front of Forest Park, located at the foot of Quezon Bridge along the banks of the Pasig River, after the groundbreaking ceremony on Feb. 9, 2002 by the teachers, school administrators, non-teaching personnel of the DepEd-Manila or the Division of City Schools, Manila and city officials.

The park is being claimed by the Winner Foundation Inc. as theirs by virtue of a memorandum of agreement signed by its officers and then Manila Mayor Alfredo S. Lim.

The contested 21,428-square meter lot on Arroceros Street was bought by the City of Manila through the Special Education Fund in then Mayor Lim's term from the LandBank of the Philippines. It was acquired on Dec. 23, 1993 and covered by City School Board Resolution Nos. 602 and 602-A, series 1992 and Transfer Certificate Title No. T-167115.

The acquisition of the real property from the LandBank was subject to the condition that the land (DECS property) shall be used as a site for school buildings under City School Board Resolution No. 692, s.1992 and City Council Resolution No. 86, dated June 8, 1993.

With these, the DepEd-Manila deemed it right to claim the property which is rightfully and legally theirs, considering that the department has been squatting at the Manila City Hall for 104 years now since it was established.

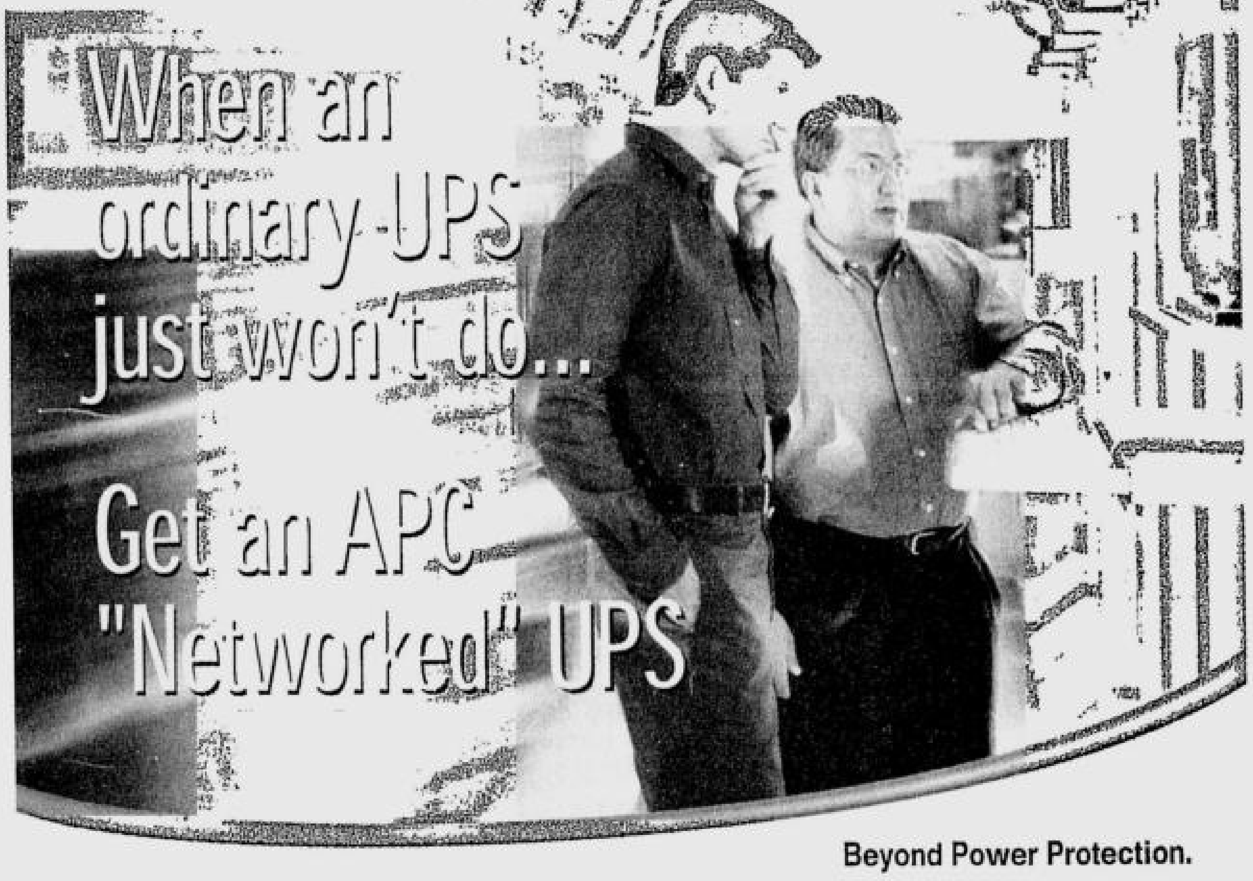
At present, the DepEd-Manila division office with the different promotional and instructional services, with a total staff of 912, are using cramped offices on the fourth floor of the Manila City Hall, and academic supervisors in the elementary and high schools are housed on P. Gomez ES, A. Mabini ES and at the Manila Science High School. The distance that separates these offices oftentimes deter the easy flow of official transactions.

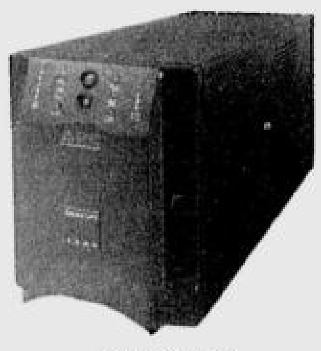
Contrary to the fear of many environmentalists, particularly the Winner Foundation, the educational structure will be built in such a way that it will blend with the ecological environment and will not in any way destroy the centuries-old trees. The architectural design will blend with nature.

The construction of the DepEd Manila building will put into reality its dream to have a "house", it can call its own—that of being housed as one family—an edifice standing in a Nature Park where everyone will enjoy working—to plan, implement, assess educational programs which will develop teachers, employees and school officials giving service to 102 public elementary and high schools and 65 private schools.

Moreover, the DepEd building will be a benchmark of achievement of the educational program of the city government in line with the Buhayin Ang Maynila program of Manila Mayor Jose L. Atienza Jr.

—ISABELITA D. CHING
Information officer V,
Publications Services
Division of City Schools,
Manila, and president,
Division Office Personnel
Association-Manila
(DOPA-Manila)





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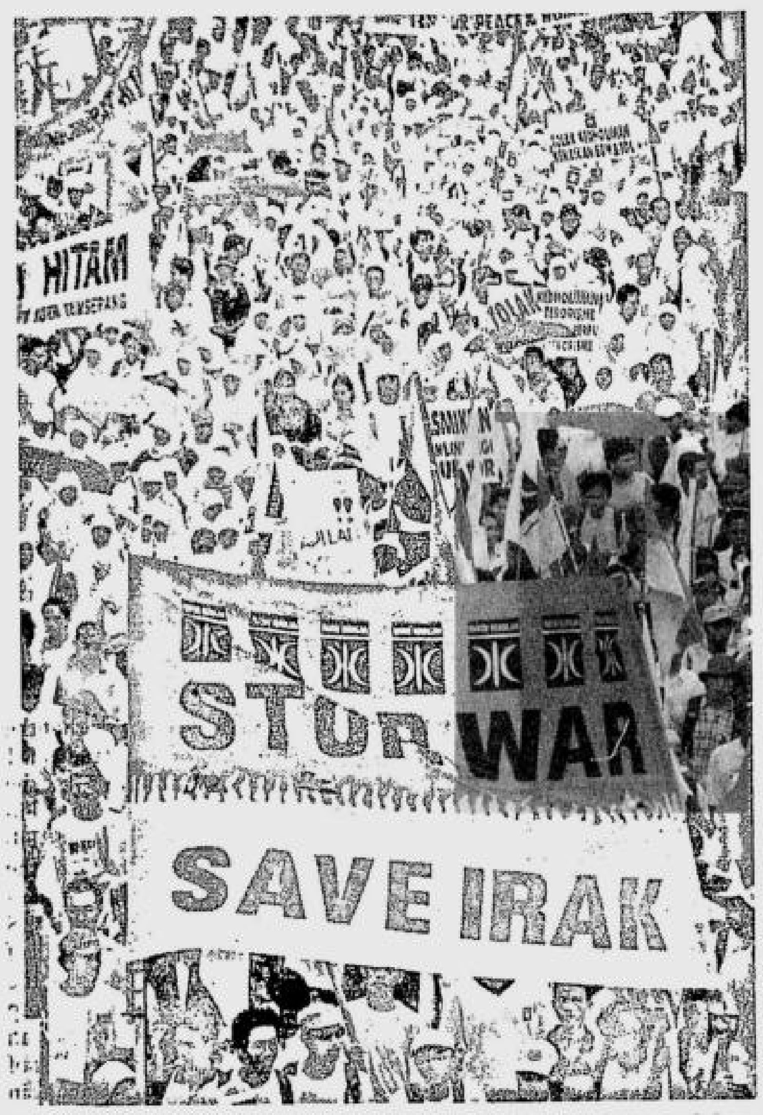
The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

100,000 Indons join anti-war protest



INDONESIAN Muslim protesters of Justice Party march toward the US Embassy in Jakarta in the biggest anti-American protest yet in the world's most populous Muslim country. AP

JAKARTA—In the biggest anti-American protest yet in the world's most populous Muslim country, tens of thousands of Indonesians on Sunday staged a peaceful protest against a possible US attack on Iraq.

Local media estimated the size of the crowd at up to 100,000.

Many of the protesters were women wearing traditional Muslim headscarves and carrying babies. They marched through downtown Jakarta, the country's capital, waving banners, "Stop War, Save Iraq," and "No more blood."

Others held their arms up in prayer and chanted: "There is no God but Allah," as they gathered in front of their last stop at the US Embassy.

"I need to show my solidarity. I feel strongly touched by this issue," Ina Muminah, 34, who brought her five small children to the rally.

Hundreds of police wielding shields and batons guarded the entrance of the embassy. But there was no violence and the crowd dispersed after midday prayers at the Central Istiqlal Mosque.

Opposition to a war with Iraq remains high in Indonesia and protests against it have gone on for months. Indonesia's government opposes a US-led strike on Iraq without UN backing.

Muslim leaders have blasted US President George W. Bush, saying he is more dangerous than Saddam Hussein for threatening war with Iraq and that an attack could result in thousands of Muslim deaths.

"It seems that US President George W. Bush is afraid of losing face if he fails to attack Iraq," said Hidayat Nurwahid, the head of the Justice Party, a moderate Muslim party, which organized the rally.

"The attack is a crime against humanity which should be protected by the international communities," the party head told the crowd.

The United States has made repeated efforts to win Indonesia's backing for a strike on Iraq. Nearly 90 percent of Indonesia's 210 million people are Muslims.

US Ambassador Ralph Boyce visited Indonesian legislators on Friday to gather support but many voiced their opposition.

The Indonesian government said Thursday there was not enough evidence yet to justify military action against Iraq despite claims by the United States that it has conclusive proof Baghdad is developing weapons of mass destruction.

Foreign ministry officials have also warned the United States against toppling Saddam Hussein and said a regime change would be difficult to accept by nations with predominantly Muslim population. *AP*

1 million Malaysians sign anti-US petition

KUALA LUMPUR—Organizers of a peace campaign in Malaysia have successfully collected more than a million signatures of people opposed to a US attack on Iraq, a report said Sunday.

Mohamad Ali Rustam, president of the national 4B youth movement, said the aim of the campaign was to demonstrate to the world that Malaysians were peace-loving.

"We should not stop lobbying for more people to sign simply because we have achieved the target. Let us work harder to turn the one million into millions," he was quoted as saying by the Sunday Star newspaper.

The US has threatened to attack Iraq over its alleged banned weapons of mass destruction. *AFP*

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  February 17–28, 2003 M-W-F 6:00PM–8:00PM
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European Union, Nato split over policy toward Baghdad

BRUSSELS—So much for a common foreign policy. The Iraq crisis has stripped Europe of the pretence that it is anywhere near speaking with one voice on the international stage.

Be it in the EU or in Nato, European countries are as split as ever, prompting critics to charge that the Old World has flunked the first big test of a drive to match its economic might with political muscle.

European Parliament chief Pat Cox wants the EU to get its act together now.

"The actual conduct of foreign policy relations at the highest political level in the EU underlines a dramatic divide between high aspirations, modest capacity and wholly inadequate political will," he complained Friday.

"No effort must be spared in the coming days and weeks, even at this late stage in terms of the current Iraqi crisis, to seek a common accord and exert EU influence where it counts—at the UN Security Council," he added.

The European Union could, if it wanted, speak with a particularly powerful voice on Iraq. The EU currently has four member states sitting on the Security Council—Britain, France, Germany and Spain.

But the reactions of the four to a much-awaited presentation last week to the Security Council by US Secretary of State Colin Powell, detailing allegations that Iraq has brazenly flouted demands to disarm, were illustrative.

Britain and Spain stuck to their support for the United States over Iraq, while France and Germany insisted that Powell had shown nothing new to justify attacking Saddam Hussein's regime.

The fight has spilled over to Nato.

Belgium, France and Germany have been holding up an accord that would allow planners at the 19-nation military alliance to begin drawing up Nato's contribution to any action against Iraq, in response to a US request.

The trio argue that military planning would put Nato irrevocably on the road to war when diplomacy still has a chance.

The Iraq imbroglio has left observers scratching their heads over whether an EU of 15, and soon to be 25, member states will ever find unity in foreign policy.

The demands of a more complex membership could make attaining a common line more difficult than ever, and it is difficult enough today.

On Jan. 27, EU foreign ministers papered over the cracks by backing the efforts of UN inspectors to root out any weapons of mass destruction held by the Iraqi regime.

Just three days later, the fig-leaf of unity was ripped away as eight European leaders, in a pointed snub to France and Germany, came together in a pro-US letter published across Europe. *AFP*

Civilian jets to ferry US troops

WASHINGTON—The Pentagon announced the activation of a plan to lease passenger and cargo aircraft from commercial airlines to ferry US troops and materiel to the Gulf area.

The authority covers 47 passenger aircraft and 31 wide-body cargo aircraft belonging to a total of 22 US airlines. The Pentagon said however it would now only be using the passenger aircraft.

The measure "is necessary due to increased operations associated with the buildup of US forces in the Persian Gulf region," the department said in a statement late Saturday.

The carriers "all volunteered to participate in this program," said Navy Captain Steve Honda, a public affairs officer. "This is a contractual arrangement and they are being paid for the use of their aircraft."

The Pentagon invoked similar authority to lease private aircraft in the run-up to the 1991 Gulf War, in which a US-led international coalition ejected Iraqi troops from occupied Kuwait.

Al least 110,000 US troops have already been deployed to the Gulf region ahead of a possible war with Iraq, according to Pentagon officials.

The officials insist the buildup remains on track to put more than 150,000 troops in the region by mid-February.

Historically, 93 percent of US troops and 41 percent of long-range military air cargo are moved by chartered commercial aircraft, according to defense officials.

The US military also announced that warplanes from a US-British coalition patrolling over southern Iraq bombed an Iraqi command and control center after it was moved into a no-fly zone.

The site, located near the city Al Kut, some 150 km southeast of Baghdad, "was a threat to coalition aircraft," the US Central Command said in a statement.

It was the first coalition strike on an Iraqi ground target since Jan. 26, the US military said.

Meanwhile, a Newsweek magazine poll found that 60 percent of Americans supported a US strike on Iraq even if UN weapons inspectors failed to find evidence of their alleged weapons of mass destruction programs.

Sixty-nine percent of those questioned said the evidence against Iraq presented by US Secretary of State Colin Powell to the UN Security Council on Wednesday was at least somewhat convincing.

Seventy percent of those polled said they supported using military force against Iraq, up 10 points from a similar poll two weeks earlier.

Seventy-four percent also said they believed Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was hiding al-Qaida terrorists and helping them to develop chemical weapons.

On Saturday President George W. Bush warned in his weekly radio address that Iraq could pass on weapons of mass destruction "to terrorists who would not hesitate to use those weapons."

The Iraqi regime "has never accounted for a vast arsenal of deadly, biological and chemical weapons," Bush said, adding that Baghdad was "pursuing an elaborate campaign to conceal its weapons materials and to hide or intimidate key experts and scientists." Baghdad has repeatedly denied having such weapons. *AFP*

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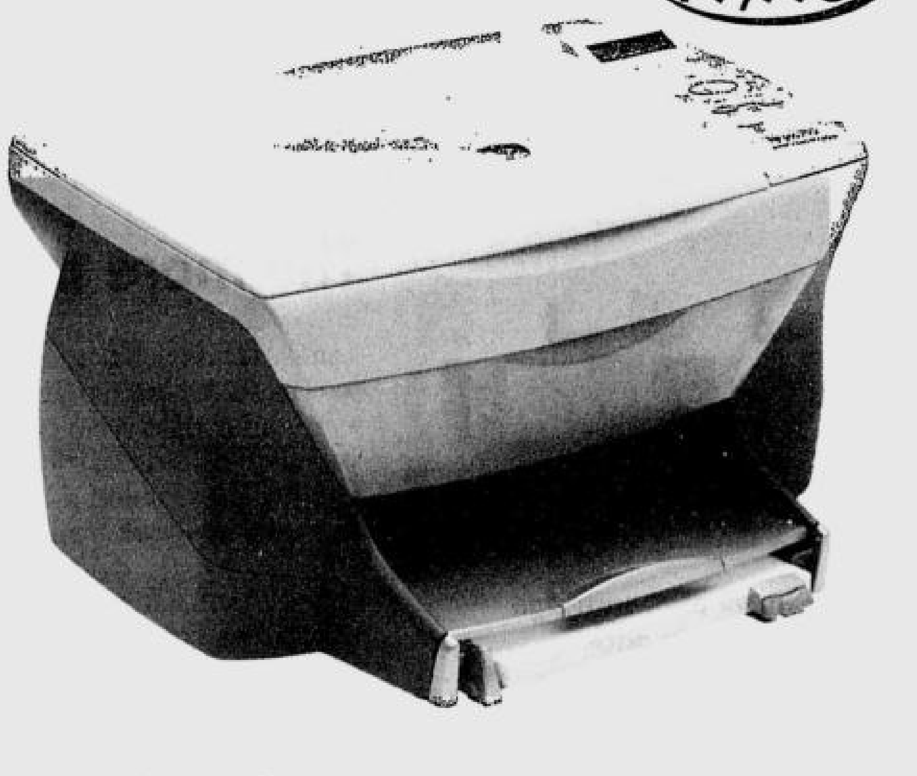

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Thai husbands compete in wife-holding contest

PATTAYA, Thailand—Eight Thai husbands—clutching their wives as a groom holds his bride—sweated, shifted and felt their muscles turn to mush, but a ninth easily lasted nearly 11 hours to set what may prove a new world "wife holding" record.

As a Valentine's Day gimmick, Ripley's Believe It or Not! Museum staged a "Carry Your Lover" contest Saturday in this popular beachside resort.

Somporn Naksuetrong, general manager of the museum, said a longest kissing contest had originally been considered.

"(But) Thai culture doesn't accept kissing in public, so we changed it to a carrying-your-lover contest," he said.

Winning the 100,000 baht ($2,300) prize were Amnat Puttigo, at 80 kg, the heaviest of the male contestants, and his 35-kg wife Chanantida Bunsamer, the lightest woman.

Looking like a pixie in the arms of a Goliath, the 24-year-old couple looked slightly bored by the chore, and decided to call it quits after 10 hours, 49 minutes and 15 seconds.

Organizers at the museum, a franchise of the US-based Ripley's Believe It or Not!, said the results would be sent to the Guinness World Records in London for approval as a record in a new "Holding Someone for the Longest Time" category. *AP*

Colombia rebs blamed for killing 32 in terrorist attack in Bogota

BOGOTA, Colombia—Residents of this capital city nursed their wounded and grieved for their dead, struggling to fathom an apparent return to the dark days of urban terrorism that many thought had passed until a car bomb shattered an exclusive social club, killing 32 and injuring 162.

The government blamed leftist rebels on Saturday for the bombing of the El Nogal Club, the first massive attack in Bogota in over a decade.

The 148.5-kg bomb left in a third-floor parking garage gutted the downtown club Friday evening, when the 11-story building was full of weekend revelers, businessmen in meetings and even children preparing for a ballet. Six children were among the dead.

The attack was a shock to Bogota residents accustomed to a war, now in its fourth decade, fought mostly in rural areas. Vice President Francisco Santos said he "had no doubt" the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia or FARC, was responsible.

He blamed the rebel organization for adopting the tactics of the drug lords who terrorized the country in the late 1980s and early 1990s in a campaign to avoid extradition to the United States.

"Before, what the narcoterrorists used, now (the rebels) use without any concerns of conscience," Santos said.

The so-called "drug wars" ended here when drug lord Pablo Escobar was killed in 1993. But leftist rebels inherited control of Colombia's cocaine trade and the well-financed rebels have recently vowed to take their fight to Colombia's cities and to target the country's elite, the kind of people who were among the club's 2,000 members.

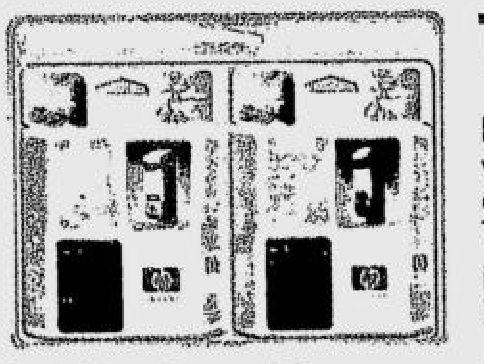
"We are not safe anywhere anymore," said one woman as she walked past the charred remains of the club.

The FARC did not claim responsibility for the attack. Local media outlets, however, speculated that a message posted on a website used frequently by the rebels contained a veiled warning.

The message, signed by an unknown group and posted Thursday, complained bitterly of President Alvaro Uribe's hardline government and of the prominent people who support it. The message ends: "We'll see on the 7th at six." The bomb exploded Friday, Feb. 7, shortly after 8 p.m.

US President George W. Bush on Saturday condemned what he called a "barbaric act of terrorism," and pledged to help Colombia find the attackers. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and Pope John Paul II also condemned the bombing.

Local media reported as many as 700 people were in the club when the bomb went off. Some of them told miraculous stories of their escape from the burning building. *AP*



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WORLDBRIEFS

Saudi request

WASHINGTON—Saudi Arabia will ask the United States to withdraw its military forces from their country at the end of an Iraq conflict, then enact democratic political reforms, the New York Times reported Sunday. The paper, quoting unnamed senior Saudi royal family members and Saudi officials, said that the move was part of the post-Sept. 11 debate designed to head off foreign and internal pressure that threatens the royal family's hold on power. Crown Prince Abdullah will ask President George W. Bush to withdraw all US forces from Saudi Arabia as soon as the campaign to disarm Iraq has ended, according to the Times. Then he will issue decrees calling for the election of representatives to local assemblies, part of a six-year plan to institute a democratic government culminating in a national assembly, according to the Times. *AFP*

More questions

SPACE CENTER, Houston—One week after the space shuttle Columbia broke apart as it streaked over Texas just minutes from home, Nasa still has more questions than answers. Searchers have recovered remains of all seven astronauts and more than 12,000 shards of metal, wires and debris that rained down across two states. But the findings so far have yielded few clues. The most significant discovery has been a 60-cm section of shuttle wing, including the carbon-covered leading edge designed to protect Columbia's insulating tiles as the spacecraft heats to 1,650 Celsius reentering the atmosphere. *AP*

Aceh rebels disarm

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia—Rebels in Indonesia's strife-torn Aceh began laying down their weapons Sunday, raising hopes that a peace deal brokered by Swiss-based mediators could end the province's 27-year separatist conflict. Rebels from the Free Aceh Movement presented their disarmament schedule to mediators from the Geneva-based Henry Dunnant Center for Humanitarian Dialogue. "Both the rebels and the Indonesians have expressed strong willingness to remain on schedule with the terms of the agreement," said Steve Daly, a spokesperson from the center. *Reuters*

Malaysia pullout

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysia said on Sunday it was pulling embassy staff out of Baghdad and had instructed around 200 students to prepare to leave in anticipation of a US attack on Iraq, state-run Bernama news agency reported. Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar said eight diplomats will stay on, while international efforts to avert a war continued. *Reuters*

HK terror alert

HONG KONG—Police said Sunday that Hong Kong's terror alert had been raised, but officials stressed that the risk of a terror attack in the territory remained relatively low. Although officials in the former British colony have elevated the city's terror risk to "moderate," Secretary of Security Regina Ip told reporters that Hong Kong was not a terrorist target. "There is no base or infrastructure (for terrorists)," she said Saturday. *AP*

Briton freed

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia—A British researcher jailed for five months after being accused of spying in Indonesia's troubled Aceh province was released from prison Sunday. "I'm free. It feels fantastic to be out. It's been a long five months," Lesley Jane McCulloch said, hugging fellow prison inmates as she walked out of her cell. McCulloch, a British citizen who works at Australia's Tasmania University, was arrested in September along with Joy Lee Sadler, a nurse from the US state of Iowa. The pair were initially accused of spying in Aceh—where rebels have waged a 27-year war for independence—but were later convicted of a lesser charge of violating the terms of their tourist visas. *AP*

Secretary convicted

SINGAPORE—A secretary in Singapore has been sentenced to six-and-half years in jail for stealing almost S$1.5 million ($870,000) from her Indonesian employer, the Sunday Times reported. Tjie Jan Wie, who forged more than 70 checks over a two-year period, put S$87,000 of her boss's money toward a S$242,000 Mercedes-Benz car for her lover, her lawyer told the district court Friday. The 37-year-old also stole S$20,000 from her employer, Budiono Widodo, to prevent creditors from seizing her household items, her lawyer said. *AFP*

Kurd leader slain

SULAYMANIYAH—Attackers opened fire on a group of senior Kurdish figures, killing a political leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and two others, a party military commander said Sunday. The commander blamed Islamic extremists from the Ansar al-Islam organization for the attack Saturday night on Gen. Shawkat Haji Mushir, a member of the political leadership of the party, which controls the eastern section of the Kurdish autonomous region of northeast Iraq. *AP*

Israel offers Palestinians phased ceasefire

JERUSALEM—Israel has offered the Palestinians a phased ceasefire to end two years of fighting, a senior government official said, while predicting that international pressure to remove Yasser Arafat from leadership will increase after the Iraq issue is resolved.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon held secret talks Wednesday with senior Palestinian negotiator Ahmed Qureia. It was Sharon's first meeting with a top Palestinian official in about a year. Israel Radio said the talks would renew Monday and that Dov Weisglass, director general of Sharon's office, was going Sunday to Amman to update Jordanian officials on the contacts.

Israel offered the Palestinians a phased truce under which the Army would withdraw troops from Palestinian areas where quiet reigns, said Weisglass, who was present at the meeting.

The proposal is similar to truce offers Israel has made in the past and did not appear to include a promise that Israel will stop targeting militant leaders, casting doubt on whether a ceasefire would take hold. Palestinians condemn Israel's operations to hunt and kill militant leaders as assassinations and a violation of international law.

"It proposes that everywhere they succeed in preventing attacks or showing that they are making serious efforts to do so, Israel will react accordingly by changing its military deployment in the area and easing restrictions on trade and movement," Weisglass told Israel Radio Saturday.

Such a gradual ceasefire took hold for a short while in the West Bank town of Bethlehem, but fell apart after a suicide bombing on a bus in Jerusalem on Nov. 21 which 11 people were killed. Israel reoccupied Bethlehem, the bomber's hometown, following the attack.

Since last June, Israel has reoccupied every West Bank Palestinian town and city, except Jericho, essentially overturning autonomy the Palestinians received under a 1993 interim peace deal. The Army has also reoccupied parts of the Gaza Strip, although it has stopped short of retaking the entire coastal area, considered by Israel a hotbed of militant activity.

Yasser Arafat welcomed the renewal of talks Saturday, reminding reporters gathered in front of his battered Ramallah compound that he offered to restart negotiations immediately after Sharon won a resounding victory in a Jan. 28 general election.

"There is a decision within the Palestinian leadership to continue talks with the Israelis," Arafat said. "You have to remember that I asked Sharon to resume negotiations with me and he rejected this."

Sharon refuses to hold talks with Arafat, branding him "irrelevant" and accusing him of being involved in "terrorist" activities. He has repeatedly called for his removal and the idea of expelling Arafat from the region has been raised several times by Sharon's ministers.

The United States and Europe—sponsors of an international effort to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—have also repeatedly called for Arafat's removal and the pressure to do so will increase once the United States achieves its goals in Iraq, Weisglass said.

"I have no doubt that after the end of the American operation in Iraq, if there will be such an operation . . . most of the efforts, most of the pressure and most of the activity will be invested in ending Yasser Arafat's leadership of the Palestinian Authority," Weisglass said.

"It does not mean that he will be removed from the region or that his leadership will be physically ended," Weisglass said, essentially ruling out Arafat's expulsion. "The Americans and the Europeans have been demanding for a long time that a prime minister be appointed, someone who will have effective authority in his hands, a person who will control what happens in the PA."

Israel will accept Arafat holding a "symbolic role in the Palestinian hierarchy as a compensation for his historic contribution," Weisglass added.

Sharon, who faces the daunting task of piecing together a stable coalition from a smattering of small parties that have conflicting demands and interests, is trying to entice the moderate Labor Party into his government, raising speculation that the leak about the latest talks is no coincidence.

Weisglass denied the timing of the talks—which he said have been going on for several months—is connected to Israeli politics. But Labor leaders and officials in Sharon's Likud party traded barbs Sunday over whether Sharon was breaking his promise not to "negotiate under fire."

President Moshe Katzav was expected to officially grant Sharon the task of forming a coalition on Sunday. Despite Katzav's efforts to convince Labor leader Amram Mitzna to join Sharon's government it seemed unlikely the dovish Mitzna would renege on his campaign promise to stay out of a Sharon-led coalition. *AP*

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NO MATTER how you plan your finances, chances are there are times you will come up short – could be when you're midway through renovating your home or as you expand your business. These problems require cash solutions – and fast.

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Meanwhile, Lito and Catherine found themselves a few thousand pesos short while renovating their home. "It was so frustrating to realize that we will not be able to complete the renovation, especially after all the planning we have done."

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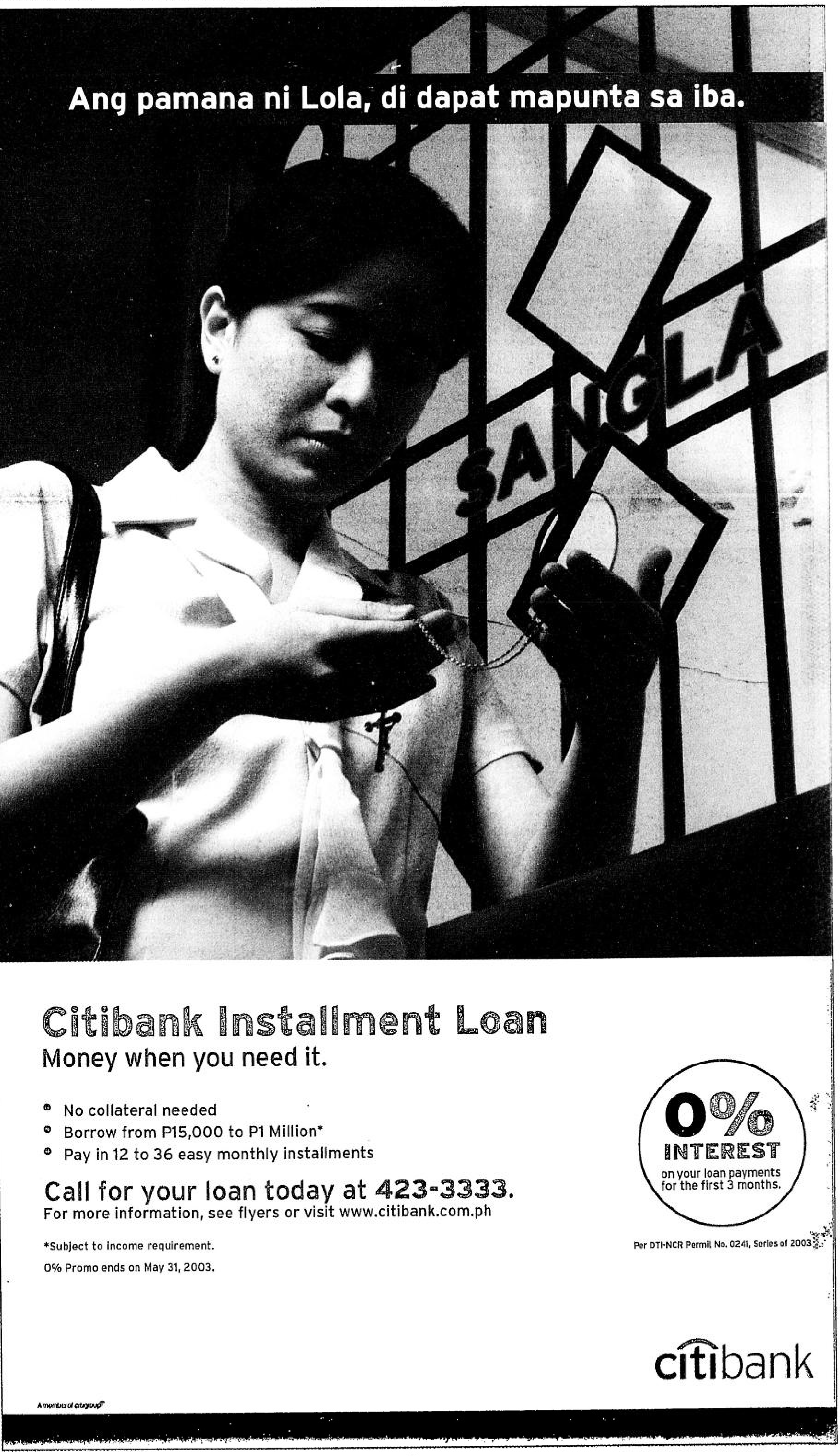
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'UNNATURAL CIRCUMSTANCES'

Cops probe kidnapping of Japanese

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—A Japanese tourist who disappeared in Jan. 30 was believed to have been kidnapped and his family might have paid six million yen, or about P2.7 million, to secure his release.

The police in Central Visayas, however, said they were looking into all other possible reasons for the disappearance of Ryohei Sato, 70, including a possible staged abduction, because of the "unnatural circumstances" leading to his disappearance.

Sato, a frequent visitor of Cebu, was last seen in the afternoon of Jan. 30 as he was leaving the Buyong Hotel and Restaurant in Barangay Maribago, Lapu-lapu City in Mactan Island, where he had been billeted since Jan. 26.

"We are looking into all possibilities including 'kidnap-me' possibility, kung totoong kidnap-for-ransom or nagtatampo lang at naglayas (if the kidnap-for-ransom is true or if he was sulking and left)," Chief Supt. Rolando Garcia, police director for Central Visayas, told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Garcia stressed that they were "treating this (case) very delicately because the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of Mr. Sato ay medyo nakadududa (is rather suspicious)," Garcia said.

Garcia said the police would continue to consider Sato's disappearance as "a missing person case" unless new evidence would prove otherwise.

Garcia said if reports were to be believed, Sato, while being held by his kidnappers, was able to talk with his daughter in Japan for an hour, which according to Garcia, is very unnatural for an authentic kidnapping case.

It was reportedly during this conversation that Sato informed his daughter that he was being held for ransom and that she should deposit the money to a bank in Cebu.

The police in Cebu learned about the supposed kidnapping when the Japanese Embassy sought its help.

Garcia, however, said that Sato's being able to talk lengthily with his daughter was not a normal behavior of a kidnap victim.

Garcia said he was also surprised why the day after Sato's disappearance, on Jan. 31, three persons including a Japanese-looking man went to Sato's hotel and tried to get his personal belongings.

"If Sato was indeed kidnapped, this is the first time that the kidnappers would go back (to the scene of the crime) to get (their victim's) belongings," Garcia added in Tagalog.

The front desk personnel of Buyong Hotel and Restaurant refused to give Sato's belongings to the three men, Garcia said.

Sato's personal belongings were taken by the police and would be turned over to his travel agency, the Best Travel, located in Subangdaku, Mandaue City, Garcia said.

Sato arrived in Cebu last Jan. 26 and was scheduled to fly back to Japan on Jan. 30.

Garcia said Sato is a regular tourist in Cebu. During his previous visits, he had tapped the service of tour guides, but he did not do so during his latest visit.

Garcia said they were trying to make sketches of the three persons who went to Buyong Hotel on Jan. 31 based on the description of the hotel's front desk personnel.

They would look into a report that Sato was with a Guest Relation Officer (GRO) of karaoke bar in Mactan on the day he disappeared, Garcia added.

Garcia said there were reports that the Japanese was seen at a Cebu bus terminal boarding a bus bound for Bacolod City but this remained unconfirmed.

Even if Sato boarded the bus for Bacolod, it would not follow that he could have been brought to Negros Island since he could disembark somewhere between Cebu City and Toledo City in western Cebu, where the bus is loaded on a barge to cross the sea to Negros Island.

Garcia added there were also no reports that Sato could have left Cebu via the Cebu Mactan Intl. Airport, prompting him to surmise that the Japanese could still be in Cebu.

But the Japanese Embassy would check if Sato has returned to Japan, Garcia said.

Cebu Daily News, the local English news daily of the INQUIRER Publications Inc. yesterday reported that the family of Sato paid 6 million yen in ransom, quoting sources at the Police anti-Crime Emergency Response (Pacer) in Central Visayas.

Pacer was reportedly informed by the Japanese Embassy that the money was sent from Japan last Feb. 7 and this was deposited in a Cebu bank.

But Senior Insp. Reuben Agustin, acting chief of Pacer in Central Visayas, denied knowledge of the supposed transfer of ransom. He said he just heard of the supposed ransom payment from Japanese reporters who visited his office on Friday.

Garcia also urged the media to be careful in handling the Sato disappearance case as it could give bad publicity to Cebu, especially since Cebu is a favorite destination of Japanese and other tourists.

"If this is overblown and it will be proven later that it was a 'kidnap-me' case after all, the tourism industry of Cebu would already be affected . . . because of a man who staged his own kidnapping," Garcia said.

AMNESTY SEEKER REUTERS

AN OLD Filipino Moro rebel fighter leaves his thumb print on his surrender papers inside a Navy ship docked in Zamboanga City. At least 79 Moro Islamic Liberation Front rebels based in Basilan surrendered on Feb. 9 in return for amnesty.

Ipra should guide minerals policy, say miners, critics

BAGUIO CITY—Mining executives and mining industry critics agreed on Saturday that the controversial 1997 Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (Ipra) must guide a proposed national minerals policy (NMP) that President Macapagal- Arroyo would issue in March.

Ipra controls any mining venture because it grants indigenous peoples the right to determine how ancestral domain resources are to be exploited, said participants in a regional consultation on the policy document drawn up for the President by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB).

The participants said many of Ipra's provisions, as well as the administrative order covering the resource management of ancestral lands and domains, must be spelled out in the document.

The Ipra assertion was presented to the forum's plenary session by lawyer Agapito Bolislis, a former counsel of the Lepanto Consolidated Mining Corp., based on documents supplied by Leilene Carantes-Gallardo, Cordillera director of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples.

It supports the stand of Tebtebba Foundation, a United Nations lobby group for indigenous peoples rights, and of the militant Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) that indigenous Filipino interests must supersede industry concerns.

The NMP, according to Horacio Ramos, MGB national director, is "a comprehensive policy document for the mining industry . . . that elaborates, refines and strengthens broad principles of sustainable development (that) provides (for) the government a strategic direction."

In a recent visit to Benguet, Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun told the INQUIRER that Ms Macapagal requires this document to jump-start government's newfound support for the mining industry, after the President discovered that the industry was one of the few enterprises that posted a 40 percent growth in 2002.

Gozun said she would submit to Malacañang a final NMP document by March, following consultations with stakeholders this month.

Industry officials said Ms Macapagal would formalize the document's application in an executive order.

A Kalinga environmentalist told Faustino Maslan, Cordillera director of the Department of Agriculture, that tribes in the province have started to close their ranks against foreign mining ventures because they wanted to develop their own mining ventures.

Maslan presided over a consultation session that focused on the relationship of the 1995 Mining Act, Ipra, the National Integrated Protected Areas System (Nipas) and various tax laws.

The Kalinga participant said members of a tribe in Balbalan town now prohibit neighboring tribes from exploiting the mineral resources of their area.

"That's part of the (outcome of) Ipra's assertion that natural resources within an ancestral domain belong to the tribe. That's a difficult (consequence) of that law (which may not be healthy for the industry)," Bolislis said.

Both Ipra and the mining act require domestic or foreign mining firms to secure the free and prior informed consent (FPIC) of indigenous peoples living on mineral lands.

Four of the country's oldest mining firms asked Gozun on Saturday to harmonize Ipra and the Nipas law with the mining act.

"(These laws) have conflicting provisions and have various interpretations. They need to be reviewed based on (their) realistic application to the development of the mining industry," read the joint position paper of Benguet Corp., Philex Mining Corp., Itogon-Suyoc Mines and the LCMC.

Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

8 Abu Sayyaf rebels slain in clash with Army troops

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Government soldiers killed eight Muslim guerrillas linked to the al-Qaida network in fresh fighting with a band holding seven Indonesian and Filipino hostages, the military said on Sunday.

Six members of the Abu Sayyaf group were wounded in Saturday's fighting on nearby Jolo island, while the military suffered no losses, army commander Colonel Alexander Aleo said.

"We are securing hospitals to prevent the Abu Sayyaf from snatching doctors to treat their wounded," Aleo told reporters.

Saturday's encounter was the latest in a series of clashes between soldiers and the group holding three Indonesian seamen and four Filipino women Christian evangelists hostage for months.

None of the hostages was sighted during the clash.

The United States has blacklisted the Abu Sayyaf as a terrorist group with suspected links to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network.

In Manila, a military spokesperson dismissed warnings by communist rebels that they would step up their offensive if the US attacked Iraq.

"There is nothing new in those threats since terrorism has always been the only language they know," Lt. Col. Michael Manquiquis said, referring to the New People's Army.

Communist spokesperson Gregorio Rosal has urged Filipinos to "defend the Iraqi people and sovereignty" against US attacks.

"The New People's Army will contribute to this effort by launching tactical offensives against the mercenary troops of the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) and the national police," Rosal said in a statement on Friday.

The military suffered its heaviest casualties in a single incident in recent weeks when seven soldiers were killed and six wounded in a clash with the NPA on Mindanao on Thursday.

The NPA is also on the US blacklist.

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RHB rebels turn Mt. Arayat into 'killing field,' cops say

ARAYAT, Pampanga—The Rebolusyonaryong Gerilyang Arayat, a band of former New People's Army rebels, could have used the fabled Mt. Arayat as a graveyard for its summary execution victims, a top police official in Central Luzon said Sunday.

Chief Supt. Oscar Calderon, regional police director, said this surfaced after the remains of a National Irrigation Administration employee, who was abducted and killed in November last year allegedly by the RGA, were exhumed on Saturday at the foothills of Mt. Arayat in Barangay San Juan Bano here.

He said an informant, who helped police locate the grave of Bernardo Dizon, indicated that several other victims of the RGA were buried in the area.

The "killing field" is near the P3.5-billion Cong Dadong Dam, a Japanese-funded irrigation project of the NIA.

Calderon declined to give details but said police and Army intelligence agents were closely working with the informant to locate other graveyards.

Senior Supt. Rodolfo Mendoza, Pampanga police director, said the RGA was behind "several killings of mysterious circumstances" in the province's eastern towns.

He said the RGA was founded and led by Norberto "Mel" Lumbang, barangay captain of Lacquios here.

Supt. Delfin Respicio Jr., Arayat police chief, said Dizon's body was already decomposing when policemen and soldiers found it on Saturday.

Respicio said Dizon's wife Ofelia identified the remains. The clothes and shoes on the body matched those that Dizon wore when he was last seen on Nov. 2.

The RGA could have suspected Dizon of exposing the illegal activities of the group, Respicio said.

Mendoza said that as a NIA employee, Dizon, 40, knew of the extortion attempts by the RGA on the contractors of the agency, irrigators associations or farmers in the area.

Mendoza said Lumbang, who was earlier charged with multiple murders for the killing of three men and attempted murder for the wounding of two others last January, was also facing murder charges for Dizon's killing. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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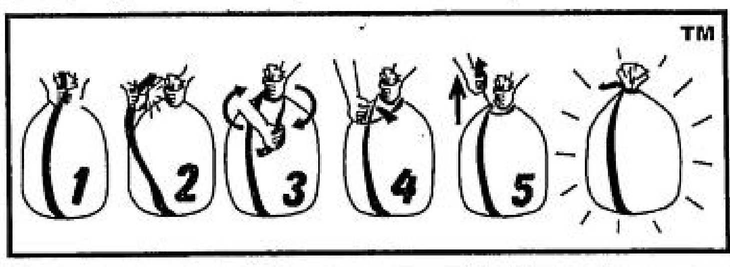

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Anti-poverty program reaches Ilocos Sur town

By Leoncio Balbin Jr.
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

GREGORIO DEL PILAR, Ilocos Sur—This historic town was roused from its deep sleep on Tuesday when national government officials descended here to commit projects for the town's economic progress.

In Malacañang, President Macapagal-Arroyo talked to villagers in Ilocano using a satellite phone and committed to provide basic services to them.

The occasion was the implementation of the Kapit Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan (Kalahi), an anti-poverty program of the Macapagal administration in Ilocos Sur.

"I am very glad that we are able to bring the government to a far-flung place, in Gregorio del Pilar, in Tirad Pass. I hope the people of Del Pilar will improve their lives because it is the thing that we want in our administration," Ms Macapagal told some 600 cheering people.

National government officials, accompanied by Ilocos Sur Gov. Deogracias Victor Savellano, former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, and Gregorio del Pilar Mayor Gilbert Ciriaco, traveled through rough roads for almost two hours from Candon City to meet the villagers.

They committed to give P2 million worth of projects to the seven villages here.

The officials launched a rural telecommunications facility of the Department of Transportation and Communications and the Gregorio del Pilar municipal government.

They unveiled the solar-powered communication system that would allow telephone services to the barangays.

Because of the distance, most of the 14 upland towns of Ilocos Sur have no telephone connections.

The officials also committed to launch livelihood projects for farmers and scholarships for school children.

Government doctors also conducted a dental and medical mission.

During the visit, Singson announced that the President had approved more than P1 billion to finance the construction of a circumferential road connecting several upland Ilocos towns. The project is supported by funds from the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

Railroad tracks to be converted into highways

LEGAZPI CITY—To decongest traffic in the highways of Daraga City and this city's downtown, local officials here have decided to convert the city's railway tracks in into a cemented highway.

Daraga mayor Jerry Jaucian said the city of Legazpi and officials from the Philippine National Railways have agreed to conduct a feasibility study on the project.

"Should this project be realized, the flow of traffic in the second district, especially in our municipality, will be hastened. It will also open business opportunities in our area," said Jaucian.

He admitted that Daraga is experiencing traffic bottlenecks especially during rush hours.

Jaucian said Daraga's main roads are narrow while its alternate roads are limited.

Legazpi City mayor Noel Rosal said he has agreed to the idea of just limiting the railroad station to Daraga while the rest of the Daraga-Legazpi portion will be converted into a diversion road.

Jaucian said the project is also in preparation for other future projects for the continuous development of Daraga, particularly the transfer of the proposed international airport from the City of Legazpi to Daraga town.

Last year, the National Economic Development Authority approved a feasibility study to transfer the proposed international airport from the city to Daraga, particularly in Barangay Alobo due to its viability.

"If this international airport materializes, it can accommodate incoming flights from all over the world. This would open doors for vast opportunities, as it will boost tourism and the economy of the entire Bicol Region." *Ronnie Lorejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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Break silence code, dead officer's pa asks AFP

STA. CRUZ, Ilocos Sur—After his relentless but still fruitless search for justice for the death of his daughter Army 2nd Lt. Jessica Chavez, Efren Chavez has realized that a major stumbling block to his quest is the military's code of silence.

"What I want is for the military to remove the code of silence for all cases and anomalies in the military establishment. I pity the victims, like my daughter, who won't get justice because of this code," Chavez said on Sunday as the family observed the second death anniversary of Jessica.

On the morning of Feb. 9, 2001, Jessica's colleagues found her with a bullet wound in the chest at the 191st Military Police Battalion's female officers quarters in Fort Bonifacio in Makati City.

Efren suspected that Jessica was murdered because she knew about some irregularities happening in the military.

He said removing the code would encourage witnesses to offer their statements to solve his daughter's case.

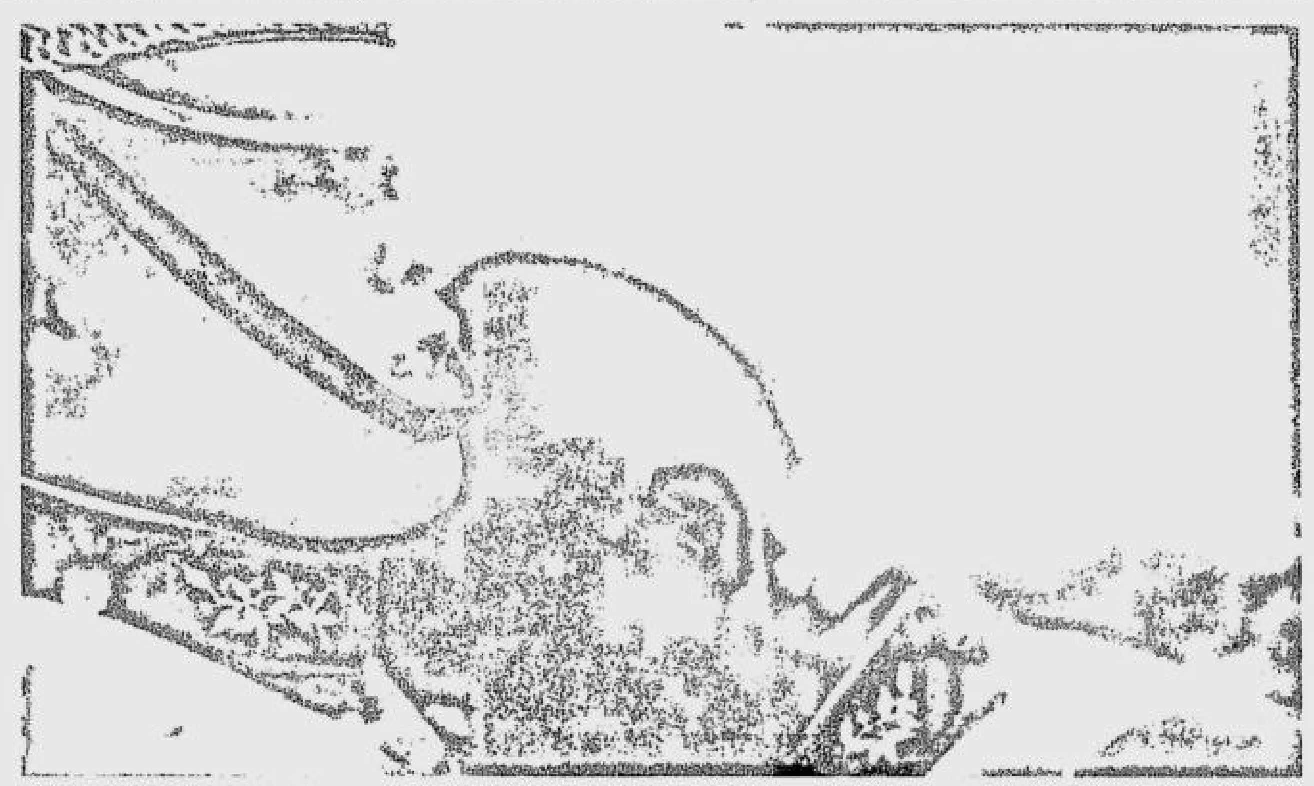
"We are appealing to all those who have knowledge of the case to speak out and testify so that the case would be reopened," Chavez said.

On Aug. 14 last year, Rizal Assistant Prosecutor Marianito Santos dismissed the criminal complaint against Jessica's officers, Maj. Ramon Dizon, Maj. Ricardo Visaya and Capt. Domingo Campos, and Pvt. Mary Arvie Juanitas for lack of merit. The cases were filed against them for obstructing the case's investigation.

Rizal prosecutors denied Chavez's motion for reconsideration on Oct. 4.

Chavez, on Oct. 23, appealed the decision before the Department of Justice, but the agency has yet to act on the motion.

He said he was not losing hope that they would get justice. *Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*



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Claimants of smuggled rice show up

BATANGAS CITY—Three businessmen from Manila, represented by their broker, have claimed ownership of the 73 container vans loaded with smuggled rice that the Coast Guard intercepted on Jan. 30 at the city pier.

Lawyer Alfredo Datinggaling of the Batangas Customs office said the claimants were represented by lawyer Francis Gustilo from Manila. Datinggaling refused to give the names of the claimants.

On Jan. 30, the MV Nossa Senhora de Fatima was intercepted by the Coast Guard as it was about to dock at the pier.

The vessel carried 93 container vans, but its manifesto listed only 50 vans loaded with corn grits that were supposed to be delivered in four farms in Luzon. The farms had fictitious addresses.

When the Coast Guard checked the 43 vans not listed in the ship's manifesto, they discovered sacks of rice that inspectors from the National Food Authority said could have come from Thailand or Vietnam.

Each van was loaded with 300 to 400 sacks of imported rice.

Capt. Alejandro Flora, Coast Guard district commander for Southern Tagalog, said they have already opened all the container vans and 73 of them had imported rice, while 20 contained cans of sardines, rubber and other dry goods.

"The smugglers have been using transshipment style," Flora said. "The ship that contained the entire smuggled rice from Vietnam or Thailand could have first docked in Mindanao and then transferred the sacks of smuggled rice into smaller ships bound for Manila and other parts of Luzon. What we have intercepted here could just be the tip of the iceberg," he pointed out.

Flora said the ship's original destination was the port of Manila, but it changed its route and went to the Batangas pier instead.

The ship came from Polloc, Cotabato, it was learned.

Flora estimated the value of the smuggled rice to be not less than P43 million.

Rice smuggling has been creating a huge dent in the local agriculture industry.

Imported smuggled rice that enters the market sells for only P400 to P500 per sack, compared to the local rice that sells from P1,000 to P1,500 per sack. *Mei Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

N. Cotabato expects P2B from rubber

KIDAPAWAN CITY—The provincial government is expecting to generate at least P2 billion for the next five years from its efforts to revive the rubber industry in the province.

Gov. Emmanuel Piñol said his administration was planning to plant rubber trees in some 100 hectares of land, most of which are non-productive, with P20,000 as an expected revenue yield per hectare each year.

"We have a very bright future with rubber and what we are about to do is a total revival," Piñol said.

Last week, Piñol and 10 town mayors visited Malaysia, a top rubber producer. The governor said they had established links with the Rubber Research Institute of Malaysia (RRIM) but will be working on a "government-to-government basis."

"Our intention was to open new horizons for the local leaders ... and our mayors saw the advancement of the rubber industry in Malaysia," Piñol said.

The mayors came from the towns of Libungan, Alamada, Midsayap, Alesosan, Pikit, Carmen, President Roxas, Antipas, Arakan and Makilala.

After the three-day trip to Malaysia, the mayors took a side trip to Thailand to see how it has developed its agriculture.

Rubber had its heydays in Cotabato in the 1980s. The industry suffered a major setback after the discovery of the synthetic rubber, which is a product of petroleum.

Recently, it was observed that rubber farmers were cutting their trees as they turned to planting fruit crops. The felled trees were transformed into fruit crates.

Today, only 40,000 hectares of rubber farms are productive in North Cotabato. The province's rubber trees are of the old variety tagged by the RRIM as Variety 600.

"What they have now are the RRIM-2025 ... it's a latex to timber variety. Farmers can benefit from its latex for many years then they can use the timber after," Piñol said, hinting that the same varieties would soon be available to the local farmers. *Jeffrey M. Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Davao City to probe Apo encroachment

DAVAO CITY—The city council's environment committee vowed to act on a petition seeking to put a halt on the expansion of banana plantations into the protected areas of Mt. Apo, which form part of Toril and Baguio districts here.

Among the banana companies identified as encroaching in the protected zone were Davao Agricultural Ventures Corp. owned by AMS Corp., Dole-Stanfilco and Global Plantation of the Lapanday Development Corp., which is owned by the family of Agriculture Sec. Luis Lorenzo Jr., according to the Interface Development Intervention, an environmental group based here.

Councilor Beethoven Orcullo, committee chair, said they found that some banana plantations operating in the area lacked Environment Clearance Certificate (ECC).

He said the committee also found that some applications for ECC have been trashed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

"We still have to find out who were responsible for the encroachment of the banana plantations there," Orcullo said.

Earlier, environmentalists urged DENR Sec. Elisea Gozun to investigate on the encroachments, which they said, have already reached the 8,000-hectare Mt. Apo protected zone.

The encroachments allegedly threaten the city's groundwater source because of the use of highly toxic chemicals in the production of bananas.

One of the plantations is reportedly nested in the 1,010-meter elevation of the Mt. Apo foothills. This is near the Talomo and Lipadas rivers.

The Water Management Coordinating Council (WMCC) has estimated that a total of five hectares of land were planted to Cavendish bananas in Saro, Manuel Guianga in Tugbok District.

Another banana firm is expanding its plantation on the slopes of Saro in violation of a forestry law that bans the construction of structures within the 18-degree slope. *Ayan C. Mellejor, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

NDF belittles former NPA leader's surrender

By Chito A. Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

TAGBILARAN CITY—The communist-led National Democratic Front Central Visayas (NDF-7) has put down the surrender of former New People's Army (NPA) chief Epitacio Ramirez alias Kumander Vargas.

Rio de la Montana, newly designated NDF-CV spokesperson, said Gov. Erico Aumentado relished on a "false sense of achievement" over Ramirez' surrender.

This, she said, was an indication that the governor was as "clueless" as President Macapagal-Arroyo on how to confront the "rapidly growing revolutionary movement."

Ramirez, 61, surrendered to Aumentado's emissaries in Davao late last year. The governor formally presented Ramirez before the Bohol Provincial Peace and Order Council last Dec. 2.

Aumentado expressed optimism that the former rebel leader, credited for founding the NPA in Bohol, would be able to contribute positively to the government's peace efforts in the province.

"It is as if amnesty programs of the Manila government, or the surrender of a few ideologically-worn out elements like Ramirez, can stop the oppressed from waging protracted people's war," said de la Montana in a statement.

She also tried to make light of the impact of Ramirez' surrender especially since the latter had attained legendary status in the middle 80s.

"Ramirez had left the NPA almost a decade ago and therefore exercises no authority over any segment of the current revolutionary forces and mass base in Bohol or anyplace else in southern Philippines," said De la Montana.

Ramirez, a native of Carmen town, joined the rebel movement in the early 1980s, at the height of abuses committed by the government under Marcos regime.

He went on to become a top rebel leader, first in Central Visayas and later in Davao, Agusan, Surigao and Caraga regions.

Aumentado earlier said Ramirez surrendered because he saw the sincerity of the government in helping the poor.

Agusan villagers flee homes as soldiers take over

ESPERANZA, Agusan del Sur—Around 175 persons from at least two *lumad* communities in Barangay Sinacungan here decided to leave their homes after a battalion of Army soldiers allegedly occupied their houses and had been staying there since Jan. 23.

Villagers from Sitio Migdalaot also complained that some of the soldiers, belonging to the 35th Infantry Battalion, physically harassed some of the men.

They were also allegedly made to sign a document stating that they were communist rebels and that their neighborhood was serving as a rebel camp.

Residents of Migdalaot and nearby Sitio Tulawas also accused the soldiers of holding them against their will.

They said they were only freed after a group from the Indigenous Peoples Apostolate (IPA) of the Diocese of Butuan, led by Sister Erlinda Hayag, went to their place to investigate.

"They prevented us from going to our farms, and if we wanted to respond to the call of nature, we were told to do it under the hut. They searched our houses and messed up our things," Datu Manbandida, one of the *lumad* leaders, said.

Soldiers also slaughtered their animals, he claimed.

Col. Juanito Cabayao, commander of the Army's 402nd Infantry Brigade, vowed to investigate the allegations.

"If we receive their complaints, then we have to make necessary actions because in accordance with the rules of engagements that our soldiers are following, there are things they should avoid like getting things from civilians," Cabayao said.

He also said the soldiers were not supposed to stay in the center of the communities.

In Davao City, a woman tribal chieftain filed charges against the military before the Commission on Human Rights on Monday.

Bai Bibiyaon Ligkayan Bigkay, an Ata-Manobo leader from San Fernando, Bukidnon accused members of the 8th Infantry Battalion and the *lumad* vigilante group Alamara of grave threats, harassment, violation of domicile, and divestment of properties.

Bigkay told CHR investigator Aida Reyes that soldiers broke into the house where she was taking a rest, along with five other women of her tribe, on Aug. 24 last year.

She said the soldiers also stripped her niece Linda Mansomuy-od.

Bigkay said Kumander Bansilan, an Alamara leader, returned four days later and threatened to rape and kill her.

Bigkay said they now feared for their lives after the incident. *Ma. Kristina E. Cassion and Ayan C. Mellejor, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Bayanihan opens Feb. 23

ZAMBOANGA CITY—The opening of the joint Bayanihan Exercise 2003 has been moved from Feb. 18 to Feb. 24, according to Col. Douglas Lengenfelder, chief of the Joint Task Force Operation Philippines. But Lengenfelder refused to give the reason for the postponement, only saying that training exercises will immediately start as soon as all the preparations shall have been put in place. He said about 60 to 70 US trainors are expected to arrive here this week to train about 12 Light Infantry Companies of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said the trainings will run for at least 10 months.

Kidnappers wound 4

STA. MARIA, Bulacan—Four men were wounded after a group of suspected kidnappers shot them in Barangay Keysio here on Thursday. Police identified the victims as Tirso Siluas, Ariel Mindol and Reynaldo Basilio, all members of the barangay peacekeeping force in Keysio. The fourth victim was identified as Julius Buruan, a driver of a balikbayan couple who were abducted by the suspects. Police said the village guards were patrolling the village when they noticed three vehicles parked along a village road. When they approached the vehicles, the suspects fired at them. Police said Buruan fetched the couple from the Ninoy Aquino International Airport and was driving them to Parañaque when the suspects waylaid them and took them to this town. After the shooting incident, the suspects fled and left the couple here. ***Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

Coughing outbreak

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—The whooping cough outbreak in the remote village of Alabel, Sarangani has been contained. But Dr. Rene Lopez, Department of Health medical specialist, said movement of residents has been limited within the affected areas to prevent the virus from spreading to other barangays. Local officials in Sarangani sent early this week the needed medical supplies, including vaccines and antibiotics, to control the infections and cure the ailing victims. Whooping cough has claimed the lives of 10 children in Datal Anggas the past weeks. Lopez, however, could not say what caused the outbreak. "The patients are being treated house-to-house. This kind of illness is preventable especially if the three doses of diptheria, pertussis, tetanus (DPT) vaccine are administered during infancy stage," he said. Medical teams administered Erythromycin to infected patients in the areas. The medication will last for about two weeks. Government is expected to spend at least P1,500 for the treatment of each patient. ***Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Removal of 'terrorist tag' on Joma as birthday gift urged

LUCENA CITY—A group of Filipinos defending Communist Party of the Philippines founder Jose Maria Sison is asking the Philippine, European and US governments to give him "perhaps the best gift" for his 64th birthday yesterday.

"The political persecution and name-calling should stop. This terrorist-tagging—done sans basis, sans due process—should be lifted so Joma and the CPP-NPA could rejoin the peace negotiations without the undue heavy burden," Rita Baua, a convenor of the Philippine Committee in Defense of Prof. Jose Ma. Sison and Filipino Progressives in Europe (Defend), said in a statement.

"On his 64th birthday, the authorities could give back to Joma his good name," Baua said. Joining her in her call were Defend convenors Iglesia Filipina Independiente Supreme Bishop Tomas Millamena, Nelia Sancho, militant trade unionist Elmer Labog, peasant leader Rafael Mariano and theater director Boni Ilagan, among others.

Baua stressed that no Filipino should be persecuted and called names just because he aspires for revolutionary change.

Sison was born Feb. 8, 1939, the same birth date with another anti-imperialist leader, Claro M. Recto.

She pointed out that by setting aside the US-instigated inclusion of Sison and the CPP-NPA in terror lists, "the EU would help bring about the resumption of formal peace negotiations."

"Joma's contributions to the flowering of people's organizations, to the fight against the Marcos dictatorship and the peace process have been glossed over in favor of officially-sanctioned slander in a vain attempt to force him to capitulate," said Baua.

She said: "The terror-tagging only confirms that Joma is a target of political persecution. With the government facing epic failures in dealing with his ideas and the armed revolutionary movement he is involved with, it has resorted to slander and attacks on his person and family, just like under the Marcos dictatorship."

"No one can dispute Sison's role in the armed struggle and peace process, both of which are aimed at addressing basic problems of foreign domination, feudal bondage and corrupt governance. Even government negotiators take their hats off to Joma's contributions to the peace process," Baua said.

Defend revealed that Sison, through a battery of human rights lawyers from Europe and the Philippines, will file his appeal today over the decision of the European Council of Ministers placing the revolutionary leader and the CPP-NPA in the EU list of terrorists.

She said they have read the appeal and found the arguments "strong and sound."

"The EU and the Philippine government would be hard put to match their wild claims against Sison with hard facts and evidence," Baua noted.

Baua added that Bayan and Defend has come out with an initial 5,000 copies of a primer on Sison's case entitled "Ang maglingkod sa bayan ay marangal" meant to explain the plight of the revolutionary leader who has been forced into exile in the Netherlands.

Sison, the CPP founding chair and currently the chief political consultant of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines based in Utrecht, The Netherlands, has been put on the list of "terrorists" by the US, the Dutch government and the European Union.

Since 1987, Sison has resided in the Netherlands where he is seeking asylum as a political refugee. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Asteroid named after Filipino science teacher

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—A science teacher, who won a prestigious international award in science teaching last year, now has an asteroid named after her.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Lincoln Laboratory in Lexington, Massachusetts has honored Dr. Josette Biyo by naming after her the minor planet (13241) Biyo.

A minor planet or planetoid is an asteroid, a rocky metallic object that orbits the sun.

Biyo, 44, teaches research subjects to junior and senior students of the Philippine Science High School at its Western Visayas campus in Jaro District here.

This mother of two boys said she liked the thought that she is in heaven.

She is married to Nonito Biyo, a retired marine engineer with whom she has two children—Juno Angelo, 15, and Julian Paulo, 7.

The MIT honor comes with Biyo's winning of the grand prize in the 2002 Intel Excellence in Teaching Award during the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in Louisville, Kentucky.

Minor planet (13241) Biyo was discovered on May 22, 1998 by the Lincoln Near Earth Asteroid Research (Linear) program at the MIT. It has a diameter of 4-9 km and orbits counterclockwise between Mars and Jupiter.

It has an absolute magnitude of 14.2 and an inclination of 7.3 degrees. (13241) Biyo could be tracked down at the Minor Planet & Comet Ephemeris Service (http://cfa-www.harvard.edu/iau/mpc.html).

Most of the asteroids stay within the main belt between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. They could be as small as pebbles or as wide as 100 km.

Astronomers say asteroids are materials left over the formation of the solar system. They might have been the remains of a planet destroyed in a collision long ago, according to one theory.

The MIT names minor planets discovered by its Linear program after students and teachers recognized by its science service program.

Biyo bested four other science teachers from China and the US in the Intel competition, but they also have minor planets named after them.

The recognition is part of the educational initiative called Ceres Connection.

In a letter to Biyo in September, Dr. Grant H. Stokes, associate head of the Lincoln Laboratory Aerospace Division and manager of the Linear Program, said that as science educator, she faced the challenge of motivating students to engage in scientific pursuits.

The letter came with a minor planet certificate, a copy of the Ceres Connection booklet and an orbital plot showing the location of (13241) Biyo with respect to major planets as of Aug. 12, 2002.

Stokes said the orbital data of the minor planet "should be good for at least a few hundred years."

According to the Minor Planet Center, the discoverers propose the names for minor planets after the asteroids were assigned their numbers.

The proposals are accompanied with a brief citation explaining the reasons for naming. Then the 13-member Committee for Small Body Nomenclature of the International Astronomical Union judges the proposed names.

The names become official when they are published in the Minor Planet Circulars. If the committee objects to a name and citation, the process can take much longer.

Almost any name is acceptable, except individuals, places or events with military or political connection, unless at least 100 years have passed since the individual or the events occurred.

This means that names from the World Wars in the 20th century are not yet acceptable.

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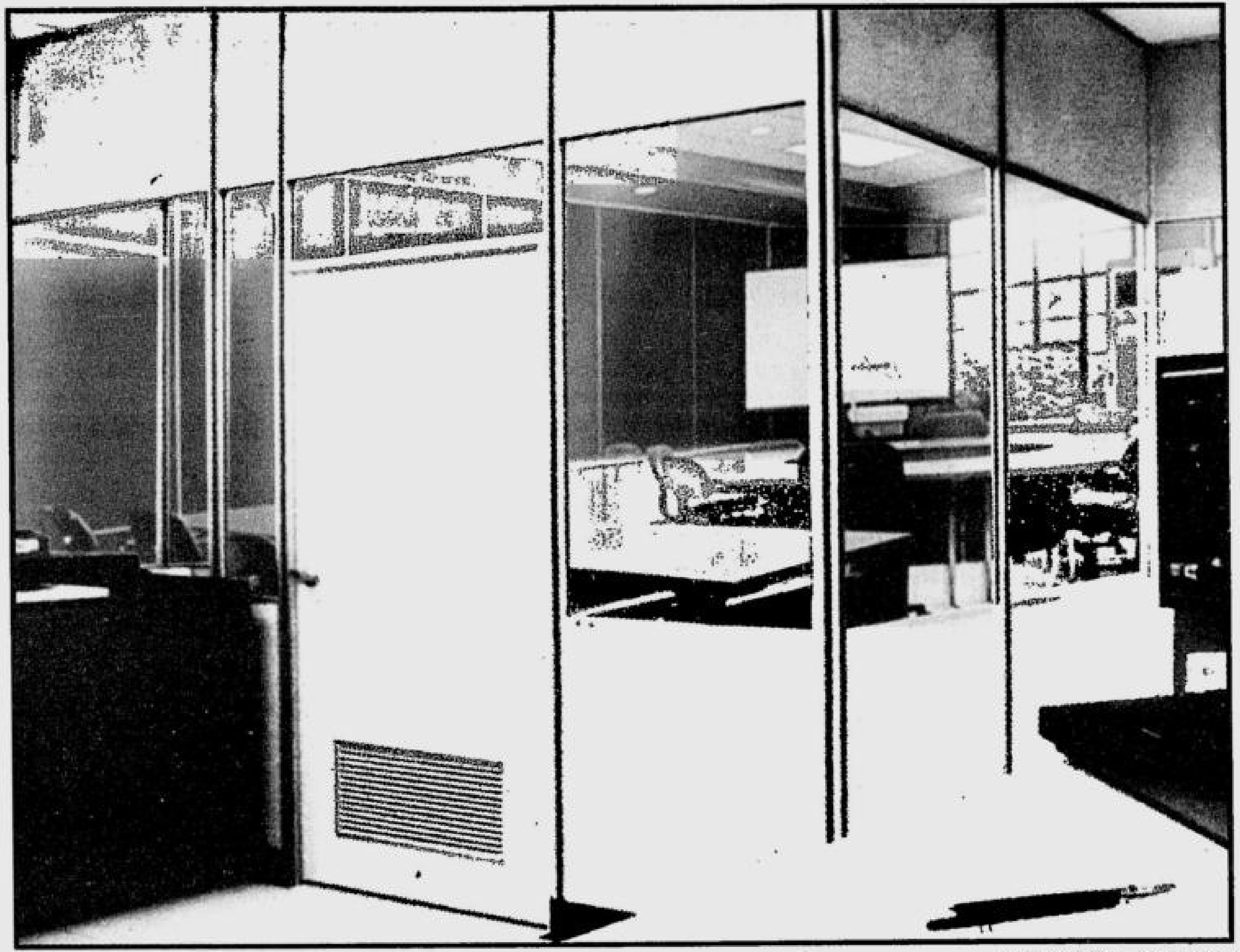

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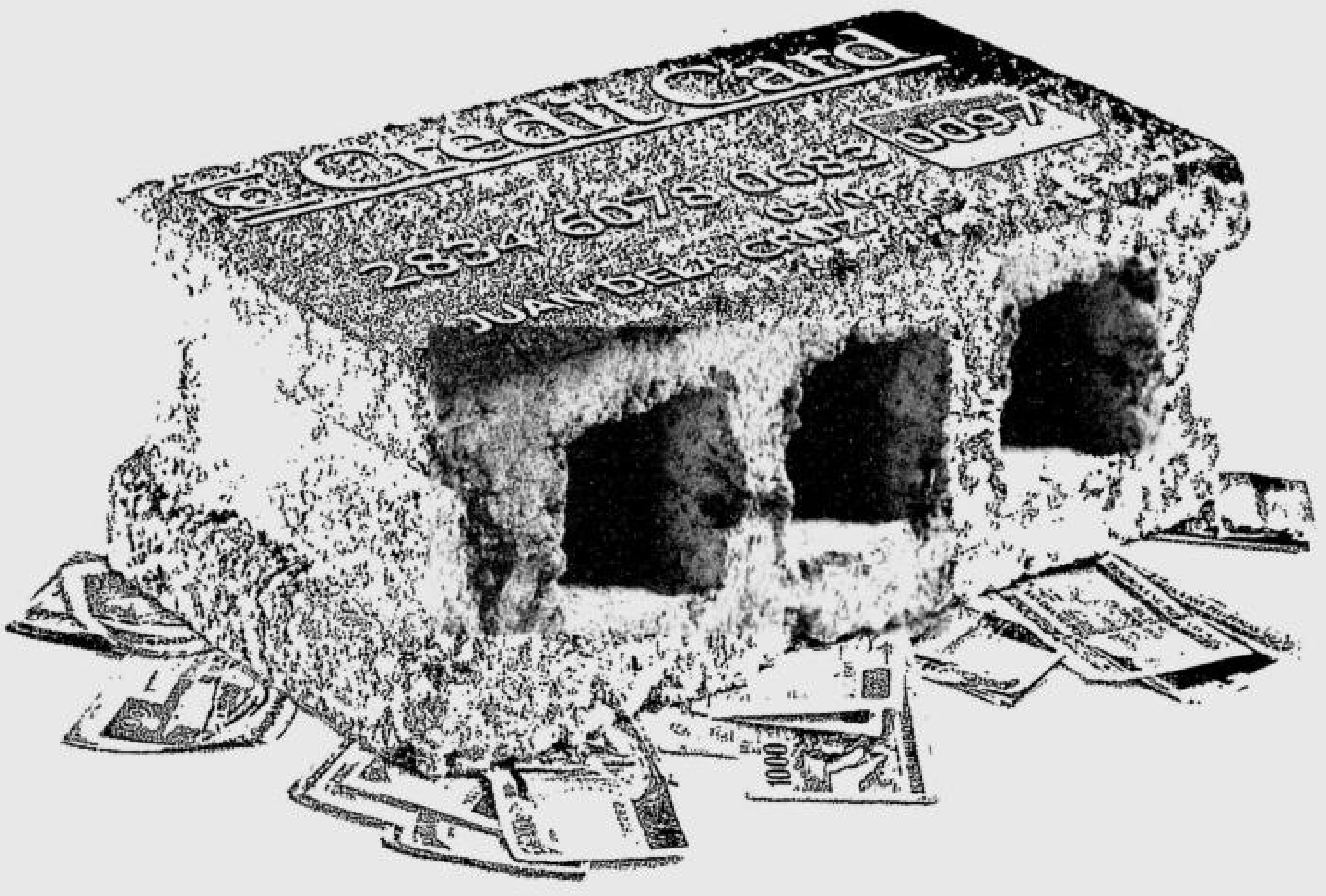

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OFWs warn lawmakers on money laundering act

From page A1

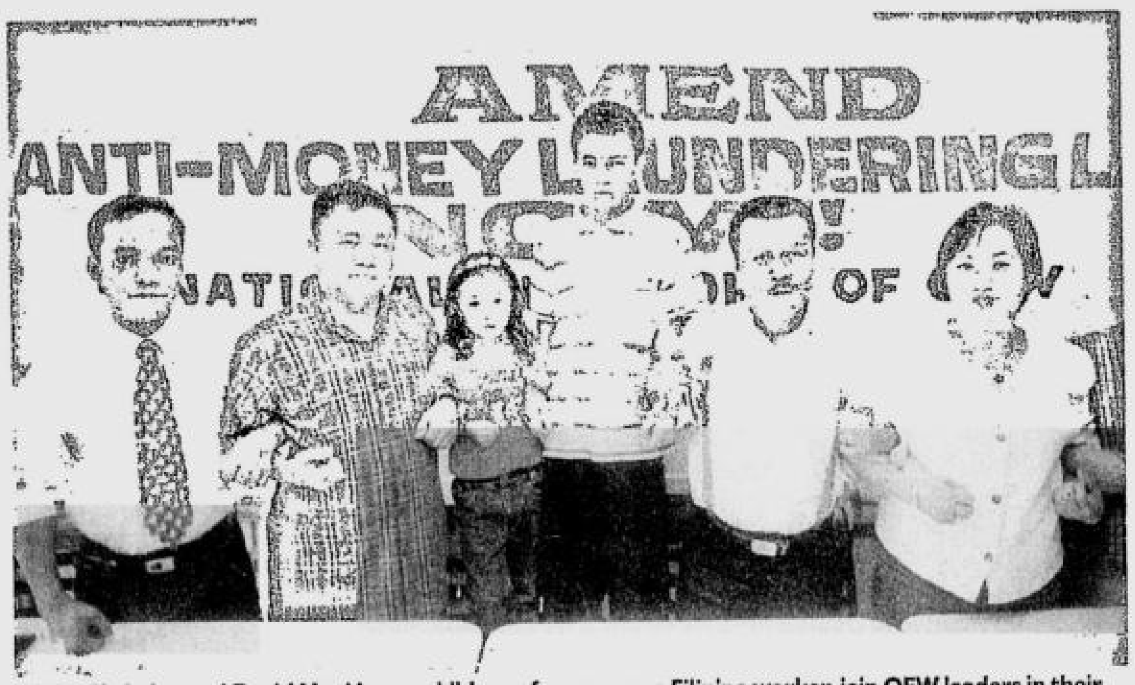
we will be forced to borrow money at usurious rates to meet payments for house rent, tuition and other necessities in life," she said.

Such popular support for the amendments, however, has failed to sway some lawmakers.

Brushing off fears of sanctions, opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara said, "We should not be cowed into unprincipled submission."

"I don't believe that we are in an either-or situation where we have to comply with the FATF demand or face dire consequences," he said.

Besides Angara, the senators in favor of the P2-million threshold for suspicious transactions, which is way above the P500,000-threshold recommended to meet the international standards against money laundering, are Senators Loren Legarda, Noli de Castro, Joker Arroyo, John Osmeña, Manuel Villar, Tito Sotto, Aquilino Pimentel, Rodolfo Biazon, Luisa Ejercito and Tessie Aquino-Oreta.



NINA Christine and David Noel Josue, children of an overseas Filipino worker, join OFW leaders in their call to amend the Anti-Money Laundering Law before Feb. 12.

AMLC

Arroyo said the senators were against the amendment favored by FATF because it would allow the Anti-Money Laundering Commission (AMLC), composed of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas governor, the Securities and Exchange Commission chair and the Insurance commissioner, to look into suspect accounts without a court order.

"Naturally, there is stiff resistance from legislators from both houses regardless of party affiliation. And that is why it is taking too long because Congress wants to be sure that in our desire to punish money launderers, innocent depositors may not fall victim to the overreaching powers of the AMLC and the BSP," Arroyo said in a statement.

He suggested that instead of "badgering Congress," Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura should go to the FATF and patiently explain to the group that Congress was doing what it could.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye remained optimistic that the bill would be passed ahead of the deadline.

"They have had some delays (but) we have a few more days," Bunye said. "Let's just hope the legislators remember the welfare of the OFWs."

The Senate is expected today to vote on the remaining two major amendments to the AMLA and pass the urgent measure on second and third reading, according to Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr.

One amendment seeks to authorize the AMLC to look into suspicious accounts without court approval, while the other proposes to amend AMLA's retroactivity provision.

In the House of Representatives, Manila Rep. Jaime Lopez, House banking committee chair, is also hopeful that a new bill will be signed before Wednesday morning.

Lopez said the House hoped to approve the measure tonight on second and third reading so that the chamber and the Senate could consolidate their versions in a bicameral conference committee meeting tomorrow. "I'm sure they will understand that we're doing this for the sake of the country," he said.

If everything proceeds according to plan, President Macapagal-Arroyo can sign the measure into law by Wednesday.

Majority Leader Neptali Gonzales was also hopeful the House would pass the measure today. He noted that even though only 92 congressmen attended last Thursday's session, this was still a "good sign" considering that it was a special session. *Reports from Gerald G. Lacuarta, Christine O. Avendaño and AFP*

Terror alters business ways, says author

From page A1

IBM, the world's largest computer company, is the main sponsor of the Philippine seminar.

Then, and even more in keeping with character, Peters boldly expands on his thought. "You can see companies becoming little nation-states" in the not-so-distant future.

It is this easy mix of closely observed experience and startling, jack-leaping-out-of-the-box insight that has made Peters one of the best-selling business authors of all time.

Starting with "In Search of Excellence," which he co-authored with fellow McKinsey analyst Robert Waterman, Peters has helped form an entire generation of managers and entrepreneurs through his books, seminars, appearances, famous PowerPoint presentations and—not to forget—a jazzy website named after himself.

None of his other work comes close to "Excellence," however, which has sold more than six million copies since 1982 and redirected attention to American business practices at the height of Japan Inc.'s success.

As dark and unexpected the terrorist threat is, however, he sees it as part of a larger age of transition. "I think we are going through a 20-30-year period of redefinition, of what an organization is, how we do politics, how wars are fought."

He talks at some length about a specific exercise in security-related re-thinking that he is privy to, but in the end requests that the details be treated as off the record. It is the only instance during the interview when the irrepressible consultant invokes that journalistic privilege.

The irony, he concludes, is "we've become more interested in security issues at the same time we are learning to work with others." This lifts security out of the usual night-watchman-with-flashlight question. The very concept of what is to be secured is itself undergoing re-definition.

"Borders don't just mean anything (anymore). It's a very fluid world."

He returns to the topic of terrorists, dwelling on the specter of terrorists with a "dirty bomb strapped around the stomach."

"I certainly think that, yes, terrorism in 10 to 20 years is ... a permanent feature" of the business scene.

Familiar name

In a significant way, Peters suffers from a familiarity problem. The man whom Fortune once called the ur-guru (a classy pun, playing up his originating role) is so familiar a name most businessmen assume they know what he is all about. Excellence. Passion. Innovation. Period.

This is a pity, because Peters, the consultant routinely classed with Michael Porter and Peter Drucker as among the three most influential business experts of all time, is a master of ambiguity and paradox.

As any businessman knows, companies compete in precisely those conditions. Information is always imperfect, markets are always unpredictable. Organizations are not always solid, customers are not always loyal. For an entrepreneur to succeed, he must have the ability, not so much to make sense of chaos, the mess of the marketplace, but to get a handle on it, a point of leverage.

It is here that Peters is almost without peer. His conversation is flavored with a large helping of "both-and," rather than "either-or" thinking.

F. Scott Fitzgerald famously defined intelligence as the ability to hold two contrary thoughts in mind without losing one's ability to function. By that standard, Peters is paid (handsomely, as much as $80,000 per day, according to an Amazon.com reviewer who regularly covers his books) for sharing intelligence.

To a question about whether the revolution in management thinking he is credited with starting had made older management theory redundant, his answer is "totally unhelpful: (it's both) yes and no."

To a question about how entrepreneurs are becoming the true measure of corporate success, he replies: "In a way they're unheralded and in a way they're not."

To a question about how to deal with the terrorist threat, he answers: "Before you had the good guys and the bad guys, (but now) it's not as simple anymore. Now we don't know how to find the bad guys."

It is a situation tailor-made for Peters, whose famous eight characteristics of excellent companies was prefaced by a chapter titled "Managing Ambiguity and Paradox."

In the interview—nighttime in Manila, early morning in Tinmouth, Vermont, where he lives—Peters climbed out on a rhetorical limb more than once. Most memorably, his discussion of the necessary role of the entrepreneur raised the inevitable question: what do terrorists have in common with entrepreneurs?

"Any person determined to make significant change in his organization is like a terrorist," Peters replied, gamely and deftly taking on the challenge. "What we call in business a change agent (may be) the mildest form of terrorist."

But it isn't only in method that a comparison may be fruitful but also in purpose.

"That's what entrepreneurs do, they 'completely change' their company and their environment."

Tougher times

The day-long seminar at the Makati Shangri-La hotel tomorrow is dedicated to a management issue that more businessmen and more businesses are forced to confront: "Doing better business during tougher times."

Just what can a company do during such times?

Peters makes a distinction between the old ways of doing business and the new.

"The old formula was: tough times equals cut costs," he says. This is the bean-counter's approach, an outlook that only considers the pesos and centavos of the short-term bottom line.

The new formula, however, is nothing less than a clarion call. "Tough times call for more innovation, more aggressiveness ... This is the time to be bold in restructuring the business." He adds, emphatically: "The biggest mistake a company makes when they have tight cash flow is ignore the people and the training."

This sounds like a dangerous obsession with the soft Ss (the shared values that lie at the core of McKinsey's 7-S framework, which he and Waterman popularized), at the expense of the hardware of business: raw material, assembly lines and delivery trucks.

But Peters would have none of this. He praises the entrepreneur: "This is the age of the entrepreneur, and the definition of entrepreneur is one who's passionate." But small businesses, he notes, have one thing in common with the world's largest companies. It is the top man's animating vision, precisely those shared values that lie at the company's center.

"Let's go to the other end of the scale: Lou Gerstner," he says. In his memoirs, Peters says, Gerstner said that when he took over IBM, he had "strategy and measurement" in mind. But at the end of his term, he had realized that "there was only one game, and that was changing the culture."

"The soft values," Peters said, preparing to leave his estate for the next appointment, "is just about 100 percent of what needs to be done."

GMA expects big US aid package during state visit

From page A1

behind the building by Bush of an "alliance of the willing" to counter the opposition by France, Germany and Russia to an early war. These countries have asked for more time for UN inspectors following Secretary of State Colin Powell's presentation to the Security Council on Feb. 5 that Iraq had engaged in systematic evasion of the UN resolution calling on it to disarm.

Kwasniewski said after Bush's State of the Union address that Poland would do anything for Bush. Poland is one of the European countries which the United States has lined up in its "alliance of the willing." The others are Britain, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

US Defense Secretary Ronald Rumsfeld has derided the French-German axis as "old Europe." French public opinion resented this reference, and a French intellectual called the US alliance with "new Europe" the entente of "mercenaries."

Mercenary

Mercenary is a key word of this critique of Bush's alliance-building. The United States is seeking to expand international support for a US-led invasion of Iraq with a new UN Security Council Resolution (if possible) and only a handful of allies (if a resolution is not possible).

Some historians have noted the analogy that Rome maintained its imperial sway by incorporating barbarian mercenaries into its occupation forces centered on the legion and by setting barbarian tribes against one another in a policy of divide and rule. This is exactly what the United States has produced in the Iraq crisis—divide the Europeans among themselves by setting up an artificial division between "new" and "old" Europe. The looming war with Iraq has indeed driven the deepest split in a common European foreign policy since the war in the Balkans.

In Asia, Bush counts the Philippines as a component of the "alliance of the willing," although the Macapagal administration has made it clear that it is not sending combat troops to Iraq in the event of war. But Ms Macapagal has added her voice to calls by Bush that Iraq disarm in a few weeks or face the risk of an attack.

State visit

For this support, as well as the spontaneous commitment of Ms Macapagal to the US-led war on international terrorism following the Sept. 11 attack, the President has struck a firm bond with Bush. She is looking forward to a big aid package from the United States in her April visit.

Ricciardone said the high status of Ms Macapagal's visit was "a matter of personal relationship" between the two presidents. Bush "was concerned" that "she (Ms Macapagal) might not be taken seriously" by other leaders and by Filipinos if her trip was not a state visit.

Bush wanted to help the Macapagal administration succeed in its reform programs in order to lay the foundations of an effective government, according to the American ambassador.

Bush does not consider Ms Macapagal a "lame-duck" president after she announced that she was not running in the 2004 presidential election, Ricciardone said. And Bush is aiding her in her reform programs because that's the way to make her government a strong partner in the anti-terrorist campaign.

Overflights

The aid promised her has not been quantified, but Ricciardone said the United States did not expect the Philippines to do more than tell Saddam to disarm. The Philippine voice, according to him, adds to the voices of other American allies demanding Iraq's compliance with the UN resolution on disarmament. Ricciardone said the United States had sounded out the government about clearance for overflights of coalition forces on their way to the Iraqi front, and about humanitarian services. He said Ms Macapagal had said "yes, in principle."

No specific requests have been made, although there are reports from Washington that Pentagon plans to dispatch a contingent of special forces to the Philippines to help Filipino troops fight the Abu Sayyaf in case the bandit group launches sympathetic strikes if Iraq is invaded. There is no confirmation of this report from the US Embassy, but combat duties here for the Green Berets are certain to spark a strong public reaction. During the joint RP-US Balikatan exercises last year, held in Abu Sayyaf territory, US troops exercised restraint. The terms of reference of Balikatan explicitly prohibited US forces from fighting with Filipino troops on the frontline. They stayed at company headquarters.

Asked whether the United States was in reality seeking UN legitimacy for its "preemptive strike doctrine" on Iraq, Ricciardone put the legal argument that the terrorist attack on Sept. 11 was "an act of war," and "we are at war with the terrorists," so there is no preemptive attack.

He also said Iraq had not complied with UN resolutions from the 1991 Gulf War and was not complying with UN Resolution 1441. The basis, however, of linking Iraq to the al-Qaida terrorists blamed for the Sept. 11 attacks has not been firmly established, even by Powell's presentation to the Security Council. The legal argument, therefore, denying preemptive strike rests on flimsy ground.

The compelling argument for an early strike is Bush's statement that the United States "will not wait for another Sept. 11 attack" before taking military action.

Jimenez an illegal alien?

From page A1

Service "lodged a Detainer against Rep. Jimenez's release," his lawyer Benedict Kuehne wrote in an e-mail. "The Detainer directs that in the event of Rep. Jimenez's release on bail in the criminal case, he is to be held without bail for immigration purposes as an illegal alien for deportation from the United States."

Jimenez complained in his diary: "The INS wants to keep me in jail for traveling to the US without visa and travel documents. What is this? Didn't I precisely go to the US to submit myself before a US court? Why would the INS declare me an illegal alien?"

The INQUIRER received a copy of the e-mail, the INS detainer, and what purport to be excerpts from Jimenez's diary from his family.

The subject of a lengthy extradition case, Jimenez voluntarily returned to the United States on Dec. 26, 2002 after high-level negotiations involving, at one point, Speaker Jose de Venecia and US Embassy officials.

He pleaded innocent to 47 counts of tax evasion, wire fraud and making illegal campaign contributions to the Democratic Party. He has been locked up since Dec. 30, at a federal detention center in Miami.

For deportation

The "Detainer Action Letter," dated Dec. 30, 2002 and signed by a certain E. Garcia, states that a "detainer has been filed against this subject (Jimenez) ... charging "Deportation (Philippines)." It continues: "Release is tentatively scheduled for pre-trial status. However, we will again notify you approximately 60 days before release."

"Efforts to obtain a release of the Immigration Detainer by INS have been unsuccessful thus far," Kuehne wrote. "The INS representatives contend that Rep. Jimenez has no legal status in the United States and is facing serious criminal charges. The INS erroneously contends that Rep. Jimenez was extradited from the Philippines to the United States. As a result, the INS has declined to release the detainer or set a reasonable bond for release pending the conclusion of the criminal case."

This legal maneuver may mean that Jimenez, after raising $300,000 in a corporate surety bond and a $200,000 personal surety bond for his criminal case, will remain in detention as an extradited alien. The corporate bond is backed by a US property, while the personal bond was guaranteed by six co-sureties.

"Plainly, the INS is acting inappropriately," Kuehne wrote. "Rep. Jimenez is not a bond risk for immigration purposes. He fully intends to remain in the United States to complete his federal case."

He added: "He should not be detained as an illegal alien, since he is in the United States with permission solely for the purpose of appearing in United States District Court proceedings."

House arrest

On Dec. 31, Bandstra fixed the amount of bail for Jimenez and ruled he would have to live in south Florida with a relative under 24-hour house arrest until the trial is completed. According to Kuehne, he and Assistant US Attorney Michael Savage, principal counsel for the US government in the case, agreed on Feb. 5 that Jimenez had satisfied the bond conditions. Both parties are awaiting Bandstra's decision.

Make-or-break talks

From page A1

Blix and ElBaradei were looking for quick Iraqi concessions on other practical matters as well in the disarmament effort, such as clearance to fly American U-2 reconnaissance planes in support of inspections.

On the more substantive issues, the chief inspectors were demanding documents or witnesses to clear up discrepancies in Iraq's accounting for anthrax, the nerve agent VX and other weapons of mass destruction produced and destroyed over a decade ago.

After Saturday's session, more than four hours of talks, Blix told reporters, "It is useful discussions we are having ... It was a very substantial discussion." ElBaradei said the Iraqis had presented unspecified "explanations on some of the issues."

The Baghdad talks will set the tone for reports Blix and ElBaradei will submit next Friday to the UN Security Council, whose member nations are searching for unanimity on the next step in the explosive crisis.

The council majority wants something short of a UN authorization for war against Iraq, sought by US President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Washington and London contend that Iraq retains chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programs prohibited by UN resolutions, and threaten a military strike if they are not satisfied Saddam has disarmed.

Paris-Berlin plan

Germany and France, however, are planning to introduce on Friday a different Security Council resolution that could undermine US-British diplomatic efforts.

"We hope that the initiative will be taken up positively in the Security Council on Feb. 14," Struck told Germany's Phoenix television in an interview on the fringes of a major security conference in the southern German city of Munich.

Struck confirmed that the plan included backing up weapons inspections in Iraq using UN troops. The plan, he said, was being driven by German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and French President Jacques Chirac, who diplomatic sources said were due to talk on Sunday.

Asked whether Germany would be prepared to participate in the proposed UN force, Struck said: "We could well take part in that." Struck added that Schroeder would discuss the idea with Russian President Vladimir Putin at talks in Berlin later on Sunday.

French and German reticence over war has infuriated Washington, prompting US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to label them "old Europe," saying they were isolated in a continent whose center of gravity was shifting east to embrace US allies in central Europe.

Egypt summit

The summit in Mubarak's seaside retreat—which brought together Egypt, a key moderate voice in the region, and Syria and Libya, which typically take harder lines on Arab relations with the rest of the world—also would back previous Arab calls for UN weapons inspectors to be given more time to determine whether Iraq is voluntarily disarming.

"The aim of the discussions today is to make an effort to avoid the option of military conflict," Egyptian Minister of Information Safwat el-Sherif told reporters shortly before Mubarak, Syria's Bashar Assad and Libya's Moammar Gadhafi began their summit.

"The attempts will ... include an endeavor with Iraq to persuade it to comply with all the Security Council resolutions and especially Resolution No. 1441," the latest resolution demanding Iraq surrender weapons of mass destruction or face serious consequences.

In an interview Friday with the pan-Arab satellite station Al-Jazeera, Gadhafi described Saddam as "insane" for invading Kuwait and added: "I believe that America is in a state of insanity for thinking of attacking Iraq."

Gadhafi's assessment reflected a sense among Arabs that they can do little to stop a US-Iraq war they fear will hamper development in the Middle East and anger Arabs already suspicious of US intentions. Many Arabs regard Washington's Mideast policies as biased in favor of Israel and bent on controlling Arab oil wealth.

While Arab leaders may be resigned to war, they have not abandoned peacemaking. Arab foreign ministers were scheduled to meet in Cairo on Feb. 16 to prepare for the annual Arab summit, expected to be held in Egypt in late February of early March.

Arab diplomats said a draft resolution expected to be adopted by Arab leaders at the full summit would stipulate that Arabs should take "all necessary measures to deal with all the destructive consequences of war," call on Iraq to cooperate fully with UN weapons inspectors and suggest Iraq be given more time to comply with UN demands.

The draft includes no offer of asylum to Saddam, an option the Arab media has speculated leaders might be considering as a peaceful way out.

Mubarak was scheduled to meet Bahrain's king on Monday. After a meeting Saturday in Jordan, Mubarak and Jordan's King Abdullah II said that UN inspectors should be given more time and that Jordan and Egypt supported "international efforts aimed at reaching a peaceful solution, which would avert the region the shadow of war."

Mandela

In Johannesburg, the Sunday Times newspaper reported that Mandela, a Nobel Prize laureate, had been asked by "distinguished people", including leaders of Arab states bordering Iraq, to persuade Saddam to step down.

Mandela's spokesperson, Zelda la Grange, said the former South African president had been "approached from different angles," but would only intervene if the United Nations requested him to do so.

Mandela last week criticized the architects of an Iraqi attack, saying US President George W. Bush "can't think properly" and that his war campaign could plunge the world into a holocaust.

South Africa, chair of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Union, has been vocal in its opposition to a war on Iraq, repeatedly saying the Security Council is the only body competent to deal with the Iraqi crisis.

There are clear signs that the United States and Britain are prepared to fight an early war.

The Pentagon announced it has started to lease civilian passenger and cargo aircraft to ferry soldiers and materiel to the region, while Britain said it had increased its deployment to 42,000 troops.

More than 110,000 US military personnel are already within striking distance of Iraq. Many of them are in Kuwait, taking over two-thirds of the country. *Reports from AP, AFP and Reuters*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, February 10, 2003
5th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading:	**Gen 1:1-19**
Gospel:	**Mk 6:53-56**

Having crossed the lake, Jesus and his disciples came ashore at Gennesaret where they tied up the boat. As soon as they landed, people recognized Jesus and ran to spread the news throughout the countryside. Wherever he was they brought to him the sick lying on their mats. And wherever he went, to villages, towns or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplace and begged him to let them touch just the fringe of his cloak. And all who touched him were cured.

Commentary

Jesus' healing power made him very popular among the people in the villages, in towns, or at crossroads. Many people listened to Jesus because he used simple words and ideas to teach about the Kingdom of God. But more impressive and what attracted the crowd was the loving presence that Jesus exudes. Even by just touching the tassel of his cloak, many people were healed.

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How Washington, Baghdad reached a standoff

PARIS—War in the Gulf looms closer by the day. Following is a chronology of the standoff between Washington and Baghdad.

2002

Jan 29: Bush declares Iraq, Iran and North Korea form an "axis of evil" which must be acted against.

July 8: Bush says Washington wishes to see a change of regime in Baghdad and will use all means to topple Saddam.

July 12-14: Iraqi officers in exile and opposition representatives set up a military council in London to topple Saddam.

Aug 2:. Iraq invites chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix to Baghdad to discuss an eventual resumption of the inspections. US Secretary of State Colin Powell refuses the invitation.

Sept 10: Iraq calls on Arabs to attack US material and human interests across the world if there is a US attack on its soil.

Sept 12: Bush delivers an ultimatum to Iraq at the 57th UN General Assembly to disarm immediately.

Sept 16: Iraq agrees to the unconditional return of UN weapons inspectors but the statement is greeted with skepticism by the White House.

Oct 11: The headquarters of the US Army 5th Corps in Europe and the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force in California are moved to Kuwait.

Nov 2: Aircraft carrier USS Constellation leaves San Diego in California for the Gulf with six other vessels.

Nov 8: Resolution No. 1441 on Iraqi disarmament is unanimously adopted by the UN Security Council and accepted on Nov. 13 by Iraq.

2003

Jan 1: A US infantry division of 17,000 men is deployed in the Gulf, and the Pentagon later announces 20,000 reservists are to be mobilized.

Jan 27:. Blix tells the Security Council that after 60 days of inspections, Iraq is defying demands to disarm.

Feb 5: Powell presents what he insists is new evidence to the UN Security Council purporting to show that Iraq is failing to disarm.

Feb 6: Bush calls for a new UN resolution to back an attack on Iraq. But he warns that if it is not forthcoming, the United States would take the initiative and act alone, warning Saddam that "the game is over." Rumsfeld upsets the Germans again by likening them to Cuba and Libya for their refusal to support the war.

Feb 7: Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov opposes new UN war resolution and a German government spokesperson says there is no need for such a move. But Rumsfeld announces in Rome that diplomatic efforts to disarm Iraq have failed. Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz warns US troops in a Russian newspaper interview that Iraq would be their "Stalingrad." Blix says Baghdad was apparently making an effort to cooperate with arms inspections. *AFP*

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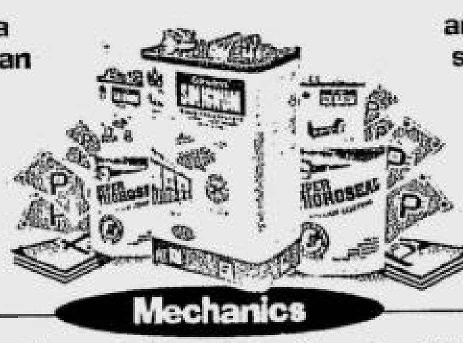

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Sick boy gets dream ride to reach the sky

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

TOURISM Secretary Richard Gordon and Van Gerald Carrasco, 17, an ailing teenager who got his wish to reach the sky—a hot-air balloon ride—give the thumbs-up sign at Clark Air Base on Saturday.

From page A1

airship with a big smile.

His mother Mila said she had never seen that smile in years.

Van Gerald, 17, who has been suffering from hydrocephalus since birth, was "extremely happy" because he finally got his wish on Saturday to "reach the sky," Mila, 53, said.

Strapped on a wheelchair that Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon pushed toward the waiting Festo, Van Gerald clapped and smiled at the sight of the 40.23-meter (132-foot) gray and blue airship. It was the first and only airship or "blimp" participating in the balloon festival, according to Joy Roa of Air Ads, one of the organizers of the unique event.

Gordon said the boy's dream came true through President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Ms Macapagal, Gordon said, immediately instructed him to arrange the boy's trip after her GMA Action Center received Mila's text message seeking help for her son's wish.

Mila, interviewed by phone on Friday from their house in Pansol, Laguna, said her son first saw the balloons through a feature on GMA-7's morning show "Unang Hirit" on the day the festival opened here on Friday.

Mila said she was surprised that her son, who usually wakes up late because of the effects of his medicines, was up early that day.

"I was watching television and he saw the balloons on screen. At first, he thought these were just big balloons. When he saw the baskets, he asked what those were for. When I said people use these to ride on, he perked up and said, 'Let's ride on it. I want to reach the sky,'" Mila recalled her son as saying.

Mila said she first dissuaded him, explaining that Pampanga was far from Laguna. Van Gerald, she said, insisted and pestered her about his wish.

The boy, she explained, usually had balloons for toys. "He's usually fascinated by these, spending much of his time tying and untying the balloons' strings," she said.

Van Gerald's brain was drained of water when he was only 10 months old. The ailment has delayed his physical and mental development.

Often during playtime, Van Gerald always mentions his wish of reaching the sky, Mila said.

She said she sent a text message to the GMA Action Center, which she mistook for the public service arm of GMA-7, to grant her son's wish.

"(The number) turned out to be Malacañang's," she said, laughing at her "good mistake."

In less than 10 minutes after sending the message, Mila got a reply from the Palace telling her that the President immediately referred the request to Gordon.

Mila said she did not have money to bring her son to Pampanga to see the balloons. Her income comes from working as a caretaker of a house in Pansol, she said.

Mila, who is separated from her husband, said the little income she earned went to the medicines and medical checkup of Van Gerald.

Fetched by a Department of Tourism service car from Laguna, mother and son were at the Manila Domestic Airport at 5:30 a.m. on Saturday.

"He's in the mood, very much in the mood," Mila said of Van Gerald's temper that morning. With Gordon, they took a Seair plane to Clark and arrived at the Omni aviation field here at 7:20 a.m.

By 7:35 a.m., Van Gerald and Gordon were propped at the Festo's backseat. German pilot Haimo Wendelstein whirred the Festo to life amid loud cheers from almost 2,000 people gathered here for the festival.

Running at a moderate speed of 40 km per hour, the Festo toured Van Gerald and Gordon over the Clark area at less than 1,000 feet high.

"Unang Hirit" host TJ Manotoc, also on board the blimp, documented the boy's "dream ride."

After the 20-minute flight, Van Gerald told reporters: "I am very happy because I love you."

"Wow Philippines!" he said later, on the prodding of Gordon.

During the flight, Gordon said the boy did not show a bit of fear or suffered seizures as Mila had anticipated.

"He was really very happy. He was exhilarated," Gordon said of Van Gerald, whom he called a "special child."

Seeing his mother in the crowd of well-wishers, Van Gerald said: "I love you, mom."

"You made me famous today, son," replied Mila, who was busy answering questions from reporters.

Mila asked the INQUIRER to relay her "a thousand thanks to the President" for making Van Gerald's wish come true.

"I am indeed very, very grateful to her," she said.

"The President really acts fast on such a request," Gordon told the INQUIRER.

After the flight, Mila and her son stayed a while to see the 15 hot-air balloons from Malaysia, South Korea, Japan, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, England and the Philippines.

There were also 100 aircraft scheduled to fly here on Saturday to celebrate the centennial of Clark as an American air base.

United Parcels Service based in Clark brought in all the balloons without any freight charge, Roa said.

> 'He's usually fascinated by balloons, spending much of his time tying and untying their strings'

House . . .

From page A1

put behind bars for life.

"A victory for many women" was how one of the bill's authors, Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Liza Maza, described its approval by the 12th Congress in a statement sent to the PDI Mindanao Bureau office in Davao City yesterday.

Maureen C. Pagaduan, executive director of the Women's Legal Bureau (WLB), said in a statement that the passage of a law that would criminalize specific acts of domestic abuse "had long been the battle cry of women throughout the country."

The Anti-Awir Bill was initially pushed during the 11th Congress by a coalition of women's rights groups, the Sama-Samang Inisyatiba ng Kababaihan sa Pagbabago ng Batas at Lipunan (Sibol). The WLB is a member of the coalition.

Sibol's position has always been that "marriages, cohabitation and intimacy are based on principles of trust, confidentiality and co-dependence, (making) women more vulnerable and susceptible to violence by their partners."

Maza, who is also secretary general of the women's advocacy group Gabriela, said that under the proposed law, a victim could file a complaint before the court or through barangay officials.

Moreover, she said, "she may obtain protection orders effective up to six months from the filing of the complaint, banning the abuser from her residence."

Sibol and the WLB commended the House of Representatives for its "immediate action," citing the commitment of Rep. Bellaflor Angara-Castillo, the bill's principal author, and Rep. Josefina Joson, chair of the committee on women.

Pagaduan said the move reflected the lawmakers' "true concern to protect and support women."

Maza urged the Senate to draw up its own version of the bill as soon as possible, and called on women's groups to increase lobby efforts in the Senate.

The WLB's more pointed call was directed at Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, sponsor of the counterpart Senate bill, and Sen. Loi Ejercito, chair of the committee on women.

"Help us win this war against abuse," Pagaduan said, "(and) complete our celebration of Women's Month in March." *Ayan C. Mellejor, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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Wie makes cut in men's Hawaii golf

AIEA, Hawaii— Thirteen-year-old Michelle Wie made the cut for the final round of the Hawaii Pearl Open on Saturday, shooting a 1-over 73 to finish two rounds at 3-over 147.

Wie was 12 strokes behind leader Greg Meyer, a Japanese tour player who was at 9-under 135 after two rounds. Meyer is the assistant golf pro at the Pearl Country Club, where the $80,000 tournament is being played.

Playing from the championship tees, Wie is the only female in the field of 192, and the youngest overall. The eighth grader was tied for 44th with seven others and had a two-stroke lead over six-time champion David Ishii, the club's director of golf.

The top 80 players plus ties qualified for Sunday's play, including at least 15 amateurs. Wie entered the day tied for 50th, seven strokes off the lead in one of the premier men's golf tournaments in Hawaii.

Wie said her goal in the three-day event–which draws half of its field from top Japanese pro and amateur players–was to place in the top 20.

Last month, Wie tried to qualify for the PGA Tour Sony Open at the Pearl Country Club. She shot a 1-over 73 from the back tees and tied for 47th against 96 men. *AP*

Love leads by 2 shots

PEBBLE BEACH, California — Davis Love III won't need an unbelievable comeback to win this Pebble Beach National Pro-Am–not if he can excel as the front-runner.

Love shot a 5-under 67 on the tough Spyglass Hill course Saturday, taking a two-stroke lead over Mike Weir, Tom Lehman and Rod Pampling into the final round.

Two years ago, Love erased a seven-stroke Sunday deficit to win at Pebble Beach–but he hasn't won a tournament since. Injuries kept him off his once-dominant form, and he dealt with mental stress from five top-five finishes without a victory last season. *AP*

GERMANY'S captain Patrik Kuehnen comforts his teammate, Michael Kohlmann, after losing their Davis Cup doubles match against Argentina. Argentina's Lucas Arnold and David Nalbandian won 6-1, 0-6, 4-6, 6-1, 6-2. AFP

France, Australia gain q'finals

BRUSSELS, Belgium—France, Australia, Spain and Argentina breezed into the Davis Cup quarterfinals after winning the doubles Saturday and taking unbeatable 3-0 leads in their first-round ties.

But Sweden and the United States, two of the most successful Davis Cup nations, looked in danger of being eliminated in the first round after losing the doubles portion of their ties and trailing 2-1 to Brazil and Croatia, respectively.

Also, defending Davis Cup champion Russia took a 2-1 lead over the Czech Republic and the Netherlands leads Switzerland 2-1.

In Bucharest, Romania, Australian Open champions Fabrice Santoro and Michael Llodra of France defeated Andrei Pavel and Gabriel Trifu 6-4, 6-3, 7-6 (4) in just over two hours.

The French, 2-0 up after Friday's singles victories for Sebastien Grosjean and Nicolas Escude, were always in control, scoring 11 aces and holding their serve throughout the match.

France, last year's runner-up, will next face the winner of the first round encounter between the Netherlands and Switzerland, which will decided on Sunday after Paul Haarhuis and Martin Verkerk defeated Roger Federer and George Bastl 3-6, 6-3, 6-4, 7-5 in Arnhem. *AP*

Mauresmo sets up final vs Williams

PARIS—Amelie Mauresmo, who nearly pulled out before the start of the tournament with a lingering knee injury, trounced Elena Dementieva 6-0, 6-0 on Saturday to set up a meeting with Serena Williams in the Paris Open final.

Mauresmo, out of action since since October after hurting her knee, has not beaten Williams in four meetings.

Williams, in her first tournament since winning her fourth successive grand slam tournament at the Australian Open appeared to have lost none of her fire in downing Greece's Eleni Daniilidou 6-2, 6-0. *Reuters*

LINA DREAM

Six-footers meet opens

TODAY'S SCHEDULE *(Lyceum Gym)*
1:30 p.m.—Opening ceremonies
2:00-3:30 p.m.—Shell-UCAA vs Red Bull-Pool A
3:30-5:00 p.m.—Coca-Cola-Pool C vs Talk N' Text-Pool A
5:00-6:30 p.m.—Sta. Lucia-Cusa vs Ginebra-NCRAA

By Roy Luarca

LINA

CAGE patron Bert Lina's dream of seeing towering point guards becomes reality today when the Six-Foot Junior Basketball Championship begins at the Lyceum Gym.

Six teams, with all players 18 years old and below and over six-feet tall, are seeing action in the novel tournament conceptualized by Lina, chair of the sponsoring FedEx and Air 2100.

Sen. Robert Jaworski will be the guest of honor in the 1:30 p.m. opening ceremonies to be followed by the inaugural encounter between Shell-UCAA and the Red-Bull National Pool at 2 p.m.

The other games pit Coca-Coca-Pool against Talk N' Text-National Pool A at 3:30 p.m. and Sta. Lucia-Cusa against Ginebra-NCRAA at 5 p.m.

The opening rites and the first two games will be telecast over NBN Channel 4 on a slightly delayed basis.

Coached by Joseph Winfield Ocampo, the UCAA selection is expected to have a tough time against Red Bull-Pool B, which is being mentored by Ching Ching Marcelino.

A league ruling stipulating that the coach must field in all 12 players in the roster, however, tends to level the competition in the tournament sanctioned by the Basketball Association of the Philippines.

Still, National Pool C of multi-titled coach Ato Balodato and National Pool A of coach Johnny Tam are picked as strong contenders because of the presence of Philippine Youth players in their fold.

The 6-footers league is envisioned by Lina, BAP vice president for Luzon, to discover young and tall players who can represent the country in future international competitions like the Asian Basketball Confederation championships and the Asian Games.

Also expected to grace the opening ceremonies are BAP president Tiny Literal, secretary general Graham Lim and EVP Christian Tan and league commissioner Fritz Gaston.

Ateneans rally behind Villanueva

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

IT warms the heart to know that in this harsh and pretentious world, there are still people who are truly magnanimous in their support of the affairs of others, wishing only the best of their fellowmen.

To illustrate Arsenio Benjamin "Arben" Santos of Southwest Maritime Corporation (Rm 503, S&L Bldg., 1500 Blvd) wrote us recently in connection with my piece entitled, "One to Watch" dated Jan. 27, 2003, saying, "I am an active member of the Ateneo alumni who is committed to supporting the affairs of our fellow Ateneans. In particular, my interest is in overseeing the smooth launch of the PBA career of our King Blue Eagle, Enrico Villanueva.

"We would like to express our deepest gratitude for your kind words in your column. The Ateneo community is indeed proud of Rico's performance and past accomplishments. It therefore brings us immense joy and fulfillment to see these, and more especially his character be given the recognition and appreciation by a renowned journalist such as you.

"As you acknowledged, we too are very much confident that Rico can carry on the same discipline and commitment he lived by when he was in the Ateneo. At the same time, we are all eager to witness him realize his full potential to ultimately be a positive impact to Red Bull and the PBA. We can assure you that we will persist in guiding him because he is the One to Watch!"

***

YOUNG MAN GOING PLACES. At 17, 6-foot-2 Paul Tan Chua, a soft-spoken basketball player from Xavier School, is slowly but surely making his presence felt in the local junior cage scene. Only recently, Paul made the Mythical Team of the JAM (Jesuits Athletic Meet) High School tournament together with Ateneo de Manila's Jose Antonio Reyes and MVP Martin Enrique Quimson and Ateneo de Davao's Christopher Robles and Miguel Solitaria. A strong rebounder and inside scorer, Paul, son of Batang Red Bull team owner George Chua, is eyeing a stint with La Salle in the UAAP cage series.

And speaking of Batang Red Bull, coach Yeng Guiao's Thunder will take on Tim Cone's Alaska Milk in an exhibition game at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 12 at the Lyceum Gym in Intramuros. On Saturday, Feb. 15, Red Bull will clash with Talk N' Text at the San Andres Center. Game time is also at 4 p.m.

***

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Birthday derby today

COCKFIGHTING buffs are assured of first class encounters in Mandaluyong Coliseum's "Birthday Special 5-Cock Derby" today. Sponsors are Sagupaan Hammer Dewormer, Sagupaan Mite Free, Complexor 3000 and Lakpue Drug Inc.

Host Sonny Lagon, fresh from ruling the "4th Ucap 7-Cock Derby" last week, assembled a formidable cast of big-time participants that include OPMI president Vic Yu, Joey Lapid, Benjie Lim, Eric dela Rosa, Jun Marasigan, Joey delos Santos, Gerry Ramos, sabong idol Patrick Antonio, Alex Tang of Bicol, Wacky Salud of Cebu, Maj. Bobby Doromal, Ramon Mansenares, Jet Fernando.

Rep. Lawrence Wacnang, Louie Cua, Biboy Enriquez, Jun Topacio, lawyer Abella, Alan Tan, Pol Estrellado, Blandy Tolentino, Richard Bates, Bobby Wong and Mayor Vic Amante.

Meanwhile, today is also the submission of entries to the "2nd LGBA Pasabong 7-Cock Derby". Participants may present their entries from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m.

At stake is a guaranteed prize of P400,000 while entry fee is only P8,000.

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8. For GMA winners, please present the following to Canon Marketing Philippines: Valid ID; Letter of notification; Original sales invoice and the winning stub.
9. Redemption Period shall be within 60 days from notification.
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Canon

Track and field chief offered to run for high IAAF post

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PHILIPPINE Amateur Track and Field Association president Go Teng Kok was tapped to run for council member of the International Amateur Athletics Federation during its convention held over the weekend in Bangkok, Thailand.

The offer came from no less than Asian Athletics Association president Shri Suresh Kalmadi of India, who is one of only four Asians presently holding positions in the 26-member IAAF council led by president Lamine Diack of Senegal.

Go said that he will still study the proposal to run for the elections slated in August in time for the World Championships in Paris.

``It will certainly give prestige not only to me but also to the country but the position entails a big responsibility," said Go, who was assured of the support of 44 Asian and 52 African member countries.

If he succeeds, Go would take the loftiest position ever held by a Filipino in the IAAF, even surpassing his mentor, the Gov. Jose Sering, who founded the AAA in 1973.

The world governing body of track and field, composed of 218 nations, is being run by the 26 council members but only four of them come from Asia like Kalmadi, Seietsu Yamamoto of Japan, Dae Won Lee of Korea and Shijie Duan of China.

GO TENG KOK

Lagon derby champ

BUSINESSMAN-sportsman engineer Sonny Lagon's Blue Blade Sweaters posted seven wins to rule the 7-Cock Derby recently at the Mandaluyong Coliseum.

Lagon's entry first breezed through last Tuesday's eliminations by beating the entries of Bobby Wong (Flyover), Patrick Antonio (Sagupaan Hammer) and Boy Diaz and Bobby del Rosario's Mangzee RMR, then went on to complete another solo victory by beating Mauro Prieto's Anito, Danding Cojuangco and Richard Bates Bumblebee and Biboy Enriquez's Firebirds.

One of the most successful and hottest game fowl breeders in the country today, Lagon, who is Ucap's back-to-back Stagfighter of the Year, bagged the prestigious Balbina Cup 7-Stag Derby title last October, also with a 7-0 finish, then closed the stag season with a 6 win-2 draw score in the Bakbakan 7-Stag national Derby at the Araneta Coliseum via his Blue Moon entry.

SPORTSTV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: 2003 NBA All-Star Game, 8:30 a.m. (r 8:30 p.m.), ESPN, 9 a.m. (r - 7 p.m.), IBC 13

GOLF: PGA AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am, 8:30 a.m. (r), 2 p.m. and 9 p.m., Star Sports

POOL: Rack 'Em Up 2, 1 p.m., Star Sports

Mosconi Cup 2002, 7 p.m., ESPN

BOWLING: USA vs Europe Tenpin Bowling 2002, 7:30 a.m. (r), ESPN

SOCCER: EPL, 6:30 a.m., Star Sports, 3 p.m., ESPN

Western Union World Football, 12 noon, ESPN

Spanish Football League, 7 p.m. (r), Star Sports

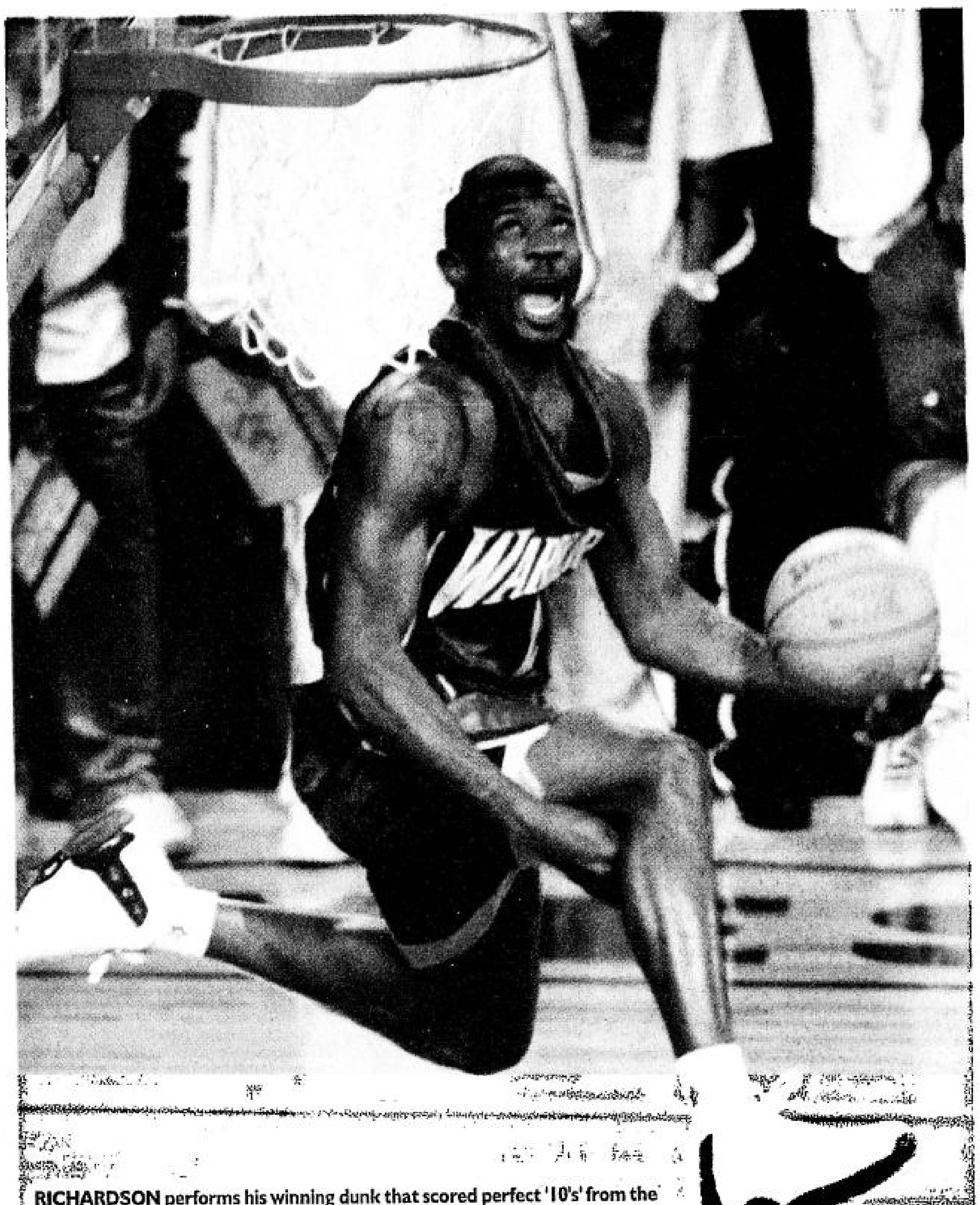
GYMNASTICS: SEC Gymnastics, 1:30 p.m. (r), ESPN

ICE SKATING: NHK Trophy 2002, 11 a.m. (r), Star Sports

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY In 1992, Jovie Saulog finished with 27 points to win the second leg of the 1992 Camel Motocross in Iloilo City.



RICHARDSON performs his winning dunk that scored perfect '10's' from the judges to win the NBA All-Star Slam Dunk contest. Richardson also won the event last year. REUTERS

Richardson mirrors MJ 'Slam' double

ATLANTA—Golden State Warriors guard Jason Richardson earned another NBA All-Star award by successfully defending his Slam Dunk title with a rim-rattling, between the legs throw-down on Saturday.

Richardson's gravity-defying dunk brought the near-sellout crowd at Philips Arena to its feet and a standing ovation from Michael Jordan, the NBA's only other back-to-back two-time Slam Duck winner, who was one of judges.

"It's getting hard to create dunks because so many guys have so many different dunks," said Richardson, who recorded perfect marks in three of his four efforts. "(With) the last dunk I tried to take what J.R. Rider started and threw it in reverse.

"It's an honor to be the only other player to win it back-to-back. To be in that category with a man who has done so much for this league and probably the best player that's ever played the game...it's an honor. To have him up there as one of the judges is a dream come true."

Richardson dominated round one with two perfect dunks to move into a final round showdown with the Seattle Supersonics' Desmond Mason.

Mason briefly took the lead after the first dunk out-pointing Richardson 50-46.

But Richardson saved his best for last, a perfect score on his second effort giving him a total of 96 while Mason scored a 43 to settle for 93.

Richardson's performance capped off a productive All-Star weekend for the 22-year-old, who earlier in the day scored a game high 31-points leading the NBA sophomores to a 132-112 victory over the rookies in the All-Star weekend rookie challenge.

"To come out two years in a row and have a good All-Star weekend, it's amazing," said Richardson, who was also named MVP of last years Rookie Challenge. "I just go out there and try to have fun."

Sacramento Kings forward Peja Stojakovic underlined his credentials as the NBA's best three-point man successfully defending his All-Star shootout title with an overtime win against Memphis Grizzlies Wesley Person. *Reuters*

Magic shines

ATLANTA—Magic in the middle, even in a halfcourt game, came out a winner again Saturday night in the NBA's Hoop-It-Up competition.

Hall of Famer Magic Johnson controlled the tempo and drove for a go-ahead layup as Los Angeles beat Atlanta 23-19 in the three-player game that is part of the NBA All-Star game festivities.

Johnson's team that included Lisa Leslie of the WNBA Los Angeles Sparks, Marko Jaric of the Los Angeles Clippers and celebrity Ashton Kutcher rallied to beat a squad led by former Hawks superstar Dominique Wilkins. *AP*

MALAYSIA TILT

Filipina sport climber sparkles in X Games

FILIPINA Joanne Songalia gave the small Philippine team something to cheer on when she emerged best-placed athlete from southeast Asia during the recent Asian X Games V at the KLCC Park in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Neither the stifling heat nor the sudden rainshowers did not deter thousands of action sports fans from witnessing the event sponsored mainly by Toyota and backed by Malaysia Airlines and adidas.

A contingent of Filipino action sport athletes flew to Malaysia to compete in the skateboard, aggressive inline, bicycle stunts (park and flatland) and sport climbing disciplines.

The 15-year-old Songalia landed third overall in the girls' sports climbing event in the ESPN Junior X Games IV Asia.

Songalia also finished third in the bouldering event behind Australian rivals Elizabeth Hall and Catherine Crane.

A second-year high school student at Sacred Heart in Tacloban City, Songalia had the best time of 16.80 seconds in the speed climbing event before settling for a fifth-best 83.33 percent in the bouldering category as Hall and Crane finished within the top three in the two events.

Another Filipino athlete, Tala Taningo, placed fifth overall in the same event behind Korean Eun Na Doh in the three-day Junior X competitions. Taningo placed fourth in both the speed and bouldering categories.

CHRISPER John Rugea of the Philippines (left) placed third overall behind Australian Thomas Farrell (extreme right) and Malaysian Mohd Hamizan Yusof, second and first place winners, respectively, in the Junior X sport climbing event.

"The bouldering event is very tough for me because there's this inclined wall that requires strength for an athlete to get through. I simply fell short in that event because I used my excitement and dedication to perform well in the Speed event," said Songalia, who came in the competitions with her mother Binky.

In the junior boys' speed climbing event, John Crisper Rugea and Michael Lagda finished third and fourth behind hometown bet Hamizan Mohd Yusof and Australia's Thomas Farrel.

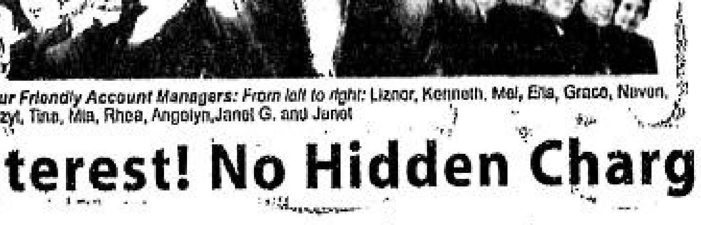
Rugea placed a fighting second in speed climbing but stumbled to a poor seventh in the bouldering hostilities.

In other Junior X Games competitions, puny Anjou Jellico Mauricio finished sixth in a field of 19 athletes in the skateboarding finals where he averaged 79 after performing four runs. The 13-year-old crowd pleaser had a total of 158 points after four runs which is far behind winner Ben Bodnar of Australia who had scores of 83 and 82 in his first two runs.

Allan Dave Legaspi was not that lucky, as he scored only 32.75 points and placed a far 15th in the Junior X aggressive in-line skate park finals. Henzel Espinosa also placed 15th in the bicycle stunt park competitions while Ren Reyes failed to make it among the top five in the bicycle flatland category in this annual event where a total of 81 junior action athletes from 11 countries participated.

JOANNE Songalia in action during the speed climbing competition.

Ansey Castañeda, the popular skateboarder who placed third here last year, leads the nine-man Philippine team in the Main X bicycle stunt flatland finals, where Raymond Pingol and Rodrigo Nagrampa are also competing.



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Lyceum, St. Stephen triumph

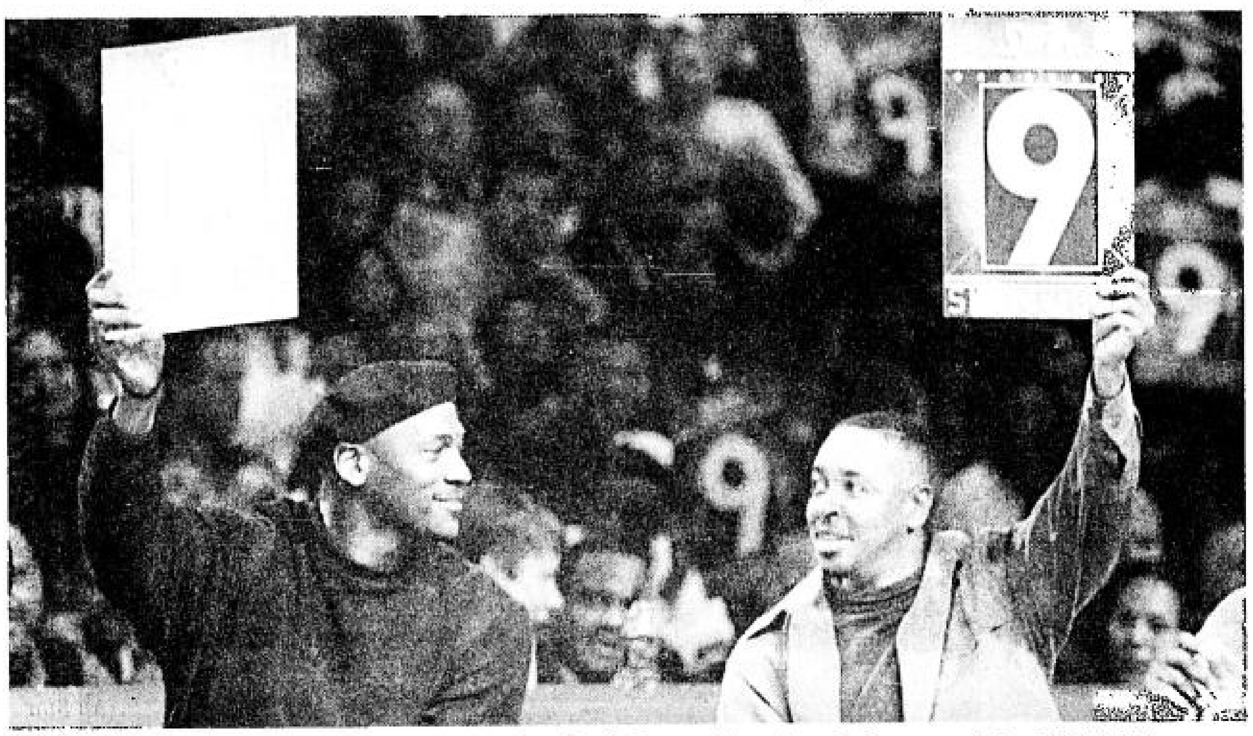
LYCEUM of the Philippines and St. Stephen High school topped the recent 33rd Women's National Collegiate Athletic Association-adidas track and field competition at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex. Lyceum emerged collegiate champion while SSHS topped the the midget and secondary levels.

SUERTRES 2 6 2
(In exact order)

SUPERLOTTO 6/49
20 24 27 35 39 46

40TH BIRTHDAY LOOMING

This will be my last NBA season–Jordan



JORDAN (left)) and Spud Webb, judges for the Slam Dunk Competition, show their scores during NBA All-Star weekend at Philips Arena in Atlanta. Jason Richardson won the event for the second straight year. AFP

ATLANTA—Michael Jordan no longer has an itch to play and not even an NBA championship will tempt him back on to the courts for another season.

Jordan's confirmation Saturday at the NBA's All-Star weekend that this season would be his last may sound strangely familiar to basketball fans.

After all, twice before Jordan has turned his back on the NBA–two seasons ago ending a three-year retirement, saying he had an itch that "needed to be scratched."

But worn down by knee injuries and with his 40 birthday looming later this month, Jordan's words had a more convincing tone as he prepared for his 13th and last All-Star appearance.

"We could win a championship and it wouldn't change my thinking," said Jordan. "I've come to grips with that."

"My gut basically has said, this is it, and I'm going to go with that. I'm not tempted to continue on to play. I just think this is my time."

"The itch is finally scratched in that sense and I can walk away knowing that." Before Jordan leaves, however, he can yet add another piece of NBA history to his lengthy resume.

For the first time, Jordan will start an All-Star game on the bench, but even the unfamiliar reserve status is unlikely to prevent the Washington Wizards' forward from collecting 10 points and surpassing Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's record of 251 to become the All-Star game's all-time leading scorer.

With Jordan's words slowly sinking in, the 52nd All-Star game has taken on the feel of a retirement party.

The NBA will pay homage to "His Airness" with a halftime tribute during Sunday's game while Jordan's peers have spent the All-Star weekend heaping praise on the player many rate as the greatest in the game's history.

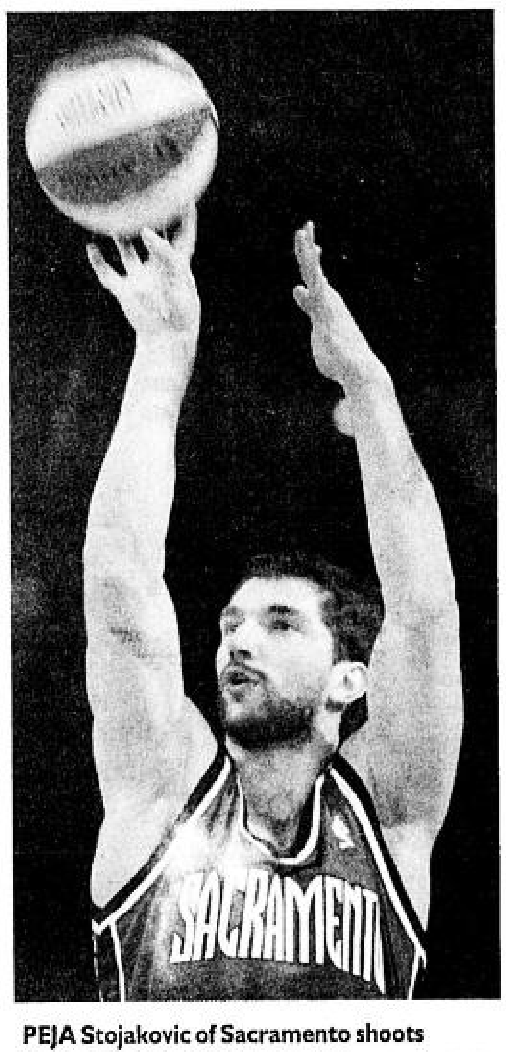
"We're gonna try to make it his day, because it's his last one," said Seattle SuperSonics guard Gary Payton.

With the end now clearly in sight, Jordan pronounced his work complete, confident he has provided the bridge between two eras, two generations of players.

While Jordan graciously declined offers from Philadelphia 76ers Allen Iverson and Orlando Magics' Tracy McGrady to give up their spots on the Eastern Conference starting lineup, the three-timed All-Star MVP said later it was the thought that counted.

"It's a respect for the elders, if you want to look at it in that sense," said Jordan. "I would have done it, easily, because I think sometimes you have to pay respect to the bridge or the gap from one era to the next." *Reuters*

LOS Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant (left) guards rookie center Yao Ming of the Houston Rockets during practice for the 52nd NBA All-Star game in Atlanta. REUTERS



PEJA Stojakovic of Sacramento shoots during the 3-Point Shootout. He was given a second chance after a buzzer inadvertently went off midway through his round and took advantage by scoring 22 of a possible 30 points to beat Wesley Person of Memphis. Stojakovic became the fifth repeat champion in the 18-year history of the event. AFP

LeBron returns, scores 52 points

TRENTON, New Jersey—A week off had no effect on LeBron James. In fact, he was better than ever.

Playing for the first time since a judge restored his eligibility, James scored a career-high 52 points to lead top-ranked St. Vincent-St. Mary of Akron, Ohio, past Westchester of Los Angeles 78-52 in the Prime Time Shootout on Saturday night.

"I told my teammates today, even before I got on the court, that I was feeling it," said James, who made 21 of 34 shots from the field, including six 3-pointers. "I felt like tonight was my night."

Not only did James get two points more than his previous career high against Mentor earlier this season, but he did it with the national and international media on hand to watch his every move. *AP*

Sophomores swamp Rookies; Arenas named MVP

ATLANTA—Jason Richardson scored 31 points and Golden State teammate Gilbert Arenas added 30 as the NBA's sophomores dominated the second half to beat the rookies 132-112 Saturday.

There were plenty of schoolyard moves, a plethora of sloppy passes and hardly any defense at all. Arenas was chosen as MVP, scoring 23 points in the second half.

But it was Richardson who provided most of the game's signature moments.

In the first half, he got a head start on defending his dunk championship later in the evening with a couple of jaw-dropping moves.

He made a 360-degree spin on his way to a one-handed slam and followed that with a reverse two-hander that left the backboard shaking and crowd oohing and aahing.

"Fans come out to see some spectacular plays," Richardson said. "When I got in the game, I tried to give them some."

Richardson finished with another dazzler from the outside. With the clock winding down and the game in hand, he dribbled leisurely outside the 3-point arc before a quick flip off Carlos Boozer's head. As if playing with a yo-yo, the ball bounced straight back to Richardson, who swished the shot for the game's final points.

"Fans love stuff like that," Richardson said. "No disrespect to Carlos. I've known him a long time."

Afterward, the two players embraced, as if there were no hard feelings, but Boozer made it clear that he didn't appreciate Richardson's closing act.

"He was just trying to get the crowd hyped up, but he has no class," Boozer said. "You don't do that."

The rookies led 69-57 at halftime and quickly pushed the margin to 15 when Gordon Giricek opened the second half with a 3-pointer.

But the sophomores reeled off a 27-12 run to tie the game at 84 with 12:09 remaining. Arenas put the sophomores ahead to stay when he sank a 3-pointer with a 10:58 to go for a 92-90 lead.

Arenas hit 5-of-8 from outside the arc in the second half to steal the MVP award away from Richardson, who took the award last year as a rookie.

"We were losing by 10 and I really wanted to win," Arenas said. "Once we came out in the second half, I thought we were going to win the game."

The rookies were blown out over the final five minutes. The sophomores closed with a 28-12 spurt and finished with their biggest lead of the game.

Neither side, however, appeared to take the outcome too seriously. In the first half alone, there were 26 dunks and 18 layups.

With everyone trying to one-up the last move, the teams combined for 55 turnovers in the 40-minute game. *AP*

HIGH SCHOOL MEET

Pasig chessers still unbeaten

SECOND seed La Immaculada Concepcion School A of Pasig City blanked sister team LICS-B 4-0 to grab the solo lead with 17 points after Sunday's fifth round of the first-ever High School Chess Team Open tournament at the multi–purpose gym of the Philippine Science Hich School along Agham Road in Diliman, Quezon City.

Bannered by Givy Bartolome, Lord Anthony Calvo, Jorey Catalan and backstopped by lone female member Gina Edaniol, LICS-A remained unbeaten in the seven-round Swiss system tournament.

Chess scholar and Elo Ratings specialist Elmer Sangalang, the event manager of the tournament, disclosed that the results of this event will form the basis of National Chess Federation of the Philippines' initial Active Chess Rating List.

Top seed Letran High School, meanwhile, is in second spot with 16.5 points after demolishing former leader Diliman Preparatory School via possible 3.5-0.5 victory. DPS top board player Ramil Lalap salvaged a draw to prevent a possible shootout win by the Knights.

Ateneo de Manila-B outclassed Rizal High School, 3-1, to climb up to third place with 15.0 points. In other featured matches, Ateneo de Manila-A clobbered Parañaque national High School, 3-1, and Lourdes School of manddaluyong ambushed Goodwill team, 3.5-0.5.

DPS totes 13.5 points in the company of Ateneo-A and Lourdes School of Mandaluyong.

The three-day event offers a total of P40,000 in cash prizes plus trophies and medals.

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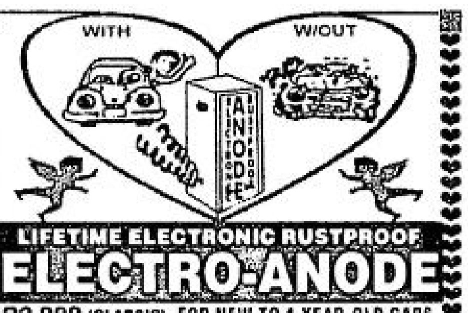

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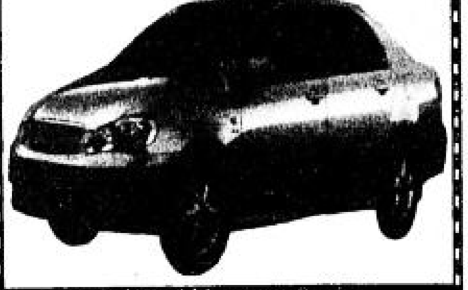

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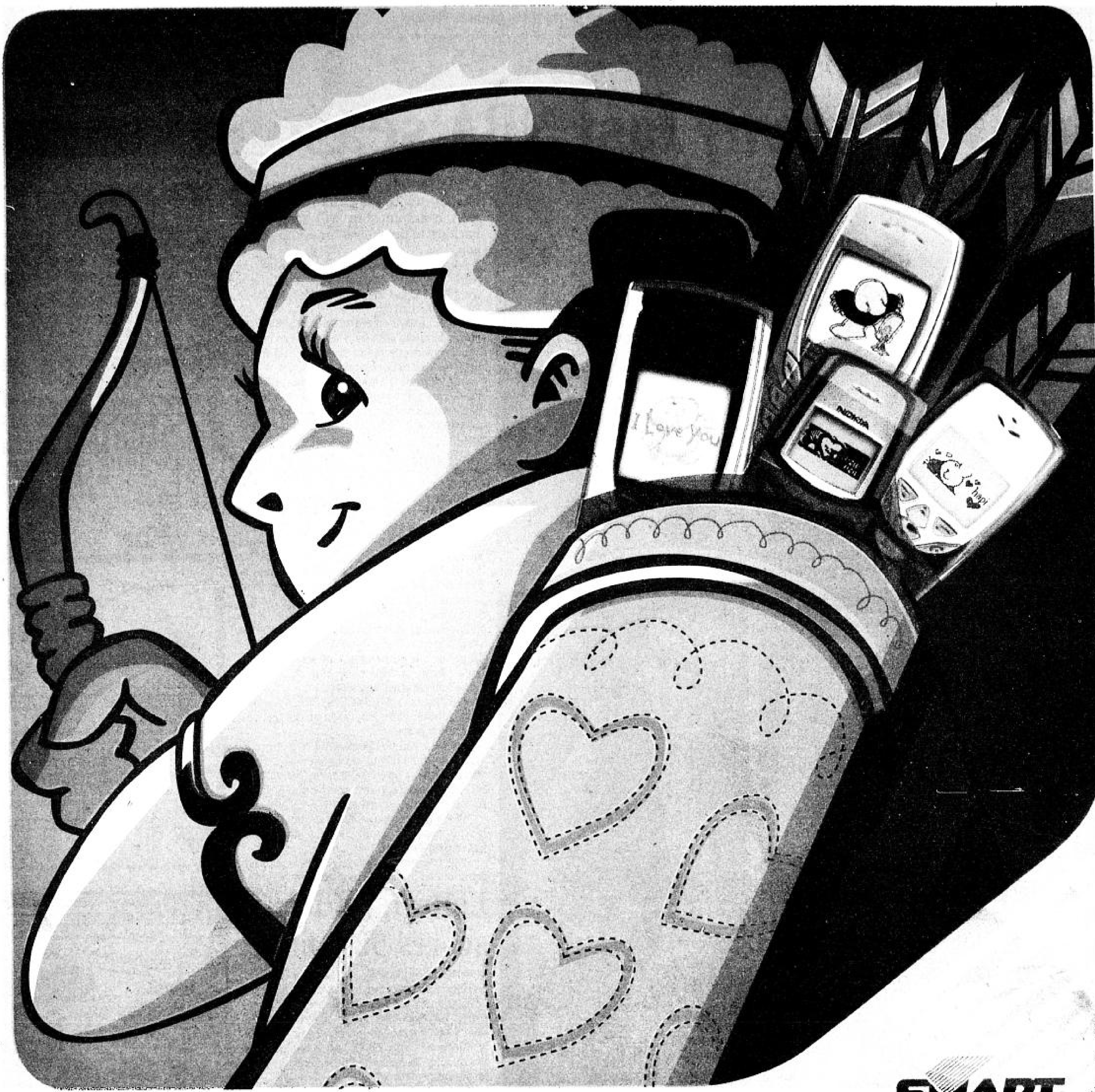
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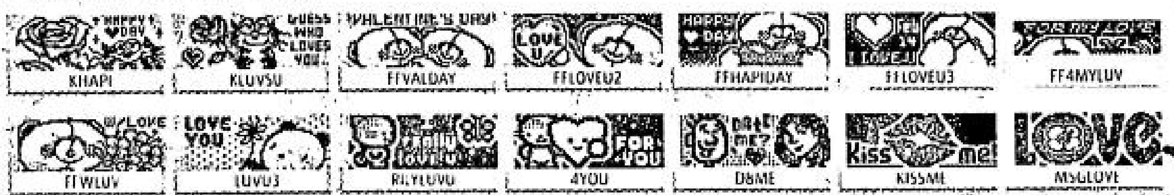
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HAPPY DAY
I LOVE U
FOR MY LOVE
W/LOVE
LOVE YOU
4 YOU
FOR YOU
DATE ME?
Kiss me!
LOVE

KHAPI
KLUVSU
FFVALDAY
FFLOVEU2
FFHAPIDAY
FFLOVEU3
FF4MYLUV
FFWLUV
LUVU3
RLYLUVU
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KISSME
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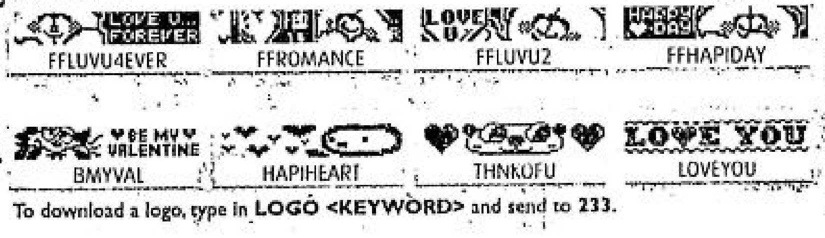
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LOVE U
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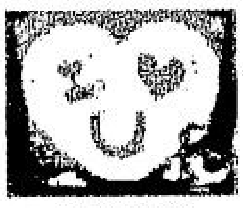
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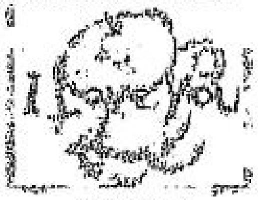

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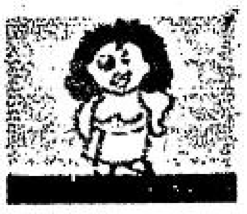
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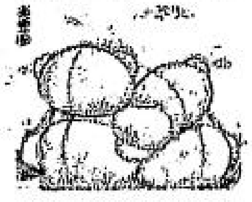
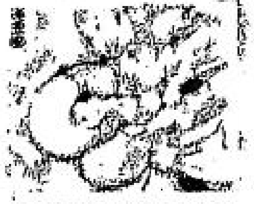

FOREVER FRIENDS - JUST YOU + ME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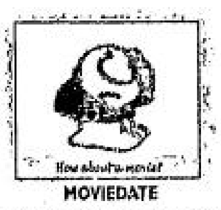
How about a movie?
MOVIEDATE

I'm stuck and I've fallen for you!
STUCK

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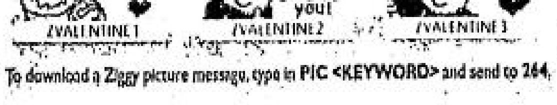
hapi
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ZVALENTINE1
ZVALENTINE2
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Editor Louie C. Camino

1 killed, 2 injured

ONE person was killed while two others were seriously hurt in separate stabbing incidents in Pasig City early yesterday morning. Police identified the fatality as Nonito Adejado, a resident of Block 13 Lot 22 Villa Valderama compound, Sitio Nagpayong II, Barangay Pinagbuhatan, Pasig City. He died on the spot due to a stab wound in the chest. *Nelson Flores*

■ Cop who led robbery gang falls in Malabon A26
■ Can the magic of texting lessen police corruption? A26

Pasay not selling Naia

By Christian V. Esguerra

IT HAS a bigger claim on the Ninoy Aquino International Airport but Pasay City, unlike Parañaque, is not about to sell its part of the airport through a public auction.

Pasay Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad yesterday said the airport owes the city government around P800 million in realty taxes since 1998.

Though the liability is much higher than Parañaque's P655-million claim, the mayor refused to follow the lead of Mayor Joey Marquez who auctioned off Naia last Friday.

FIRING HARD This daring, fiery act is best performed in a circus, but this feisty creature, badly in need but colorfully attired, blows out a big blaze to attract attention with the hope passersby in Kamuning, Quezon City would drop a few coins that could help tide him over. EDWIN BACASMAS

Since there were no takers during the auction, Parañaque bought key portions of the airport, including the runway, despite a temporary restraining order Marquez received from the Supreme Court within hours after the bidding.

Airport general manager Edgardo Manda warned Marquez that he could be cited for contempt for supposedly disregarding the TRO and an ongoing SC hearing over the land tax row.

"We don't want to add to the confusion," Trinidad said. "The time is not yet ripe to auction off Naia. The court would eventually oblige it to pay local taxes. We might as well wait."

In two months, Trinidad said the Court of Appeals is expected to rule on the airport management's motion for reconsideration on a previous resolution authorizing Pasay to collect realty taxes from Naia.

Even if the Manila International Airport Authority brings the case to the Supreme Court, Trinidad was confident the high tribunal would uphold the CA ruling.

"While it's our priority to collect realty taxes from Naia, we also don't want to burn our bridges with its officials," he said. "So far, our relationship has been very cordial and we're having parallel negotiations."

TRINIDAD

Pasay was supposed to place the airport on the auction block in November last year but called off the plan after the MIAA donated a 4,500-square-meter lot as partial tax payment, the mayor said.

The sprawling property in Barangay Kalayaan would be the site of a public high school, he said.

"Despite all these problems, we know the MIAA would pay. It's just a matter of time," Trinidad said, noting that the airport management had shelled out around P62 million in realty tax payment in 1998.

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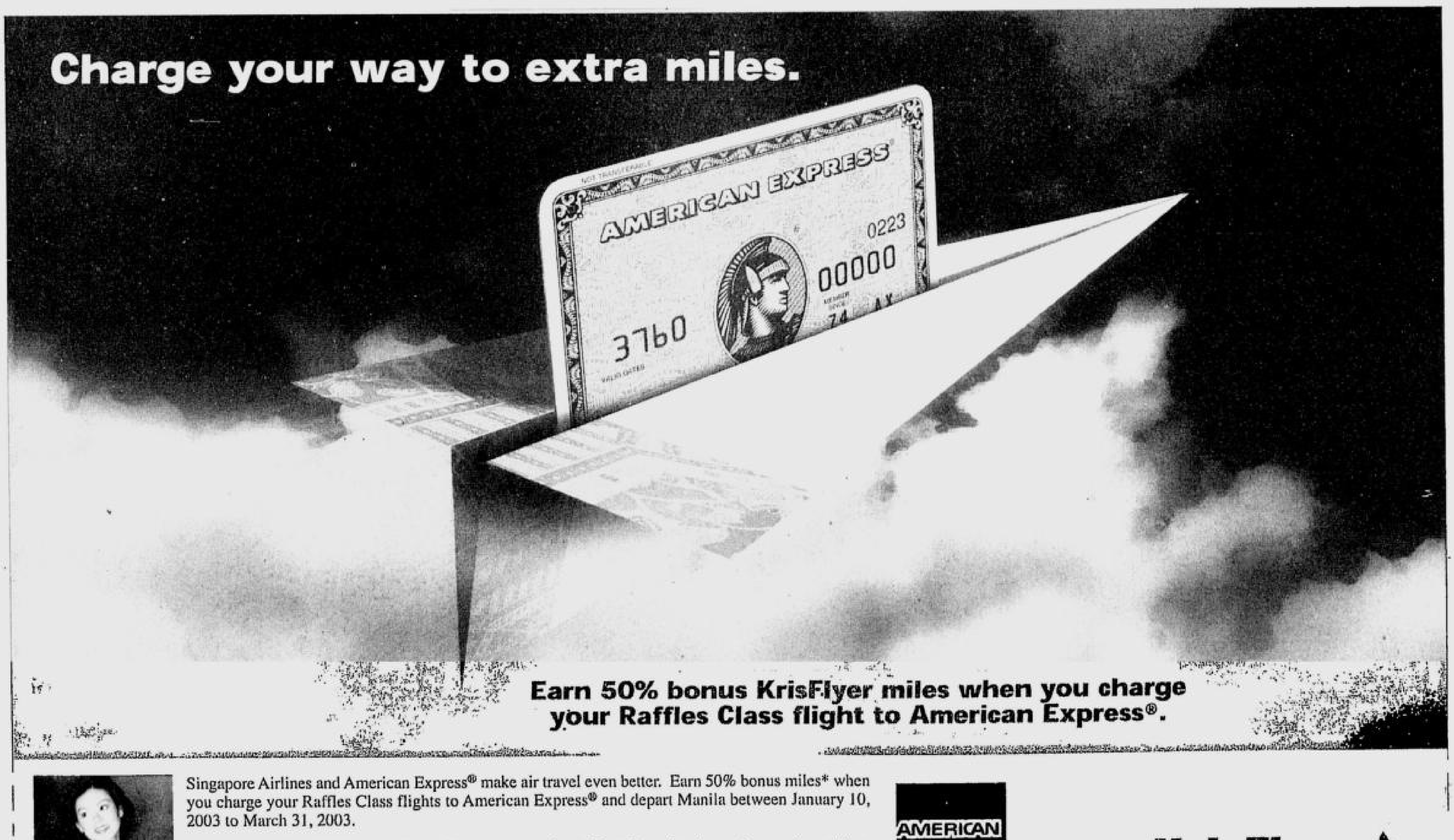

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First hearing on Manila's 'close-open' park set this morning

By Jerome Aning

THE CONTROVERSIAL Arroceros Forest Park will be closed until the teachers' center and the botanical garden in the premises are finished, Manila mayor Lito Atienza has announced.

The move was Atienza's reaction to members of the the park's developer Winner Foundation, who opened the 2.1-hectare park to the public early last week and are now complaining of being prevented from returning.

Asked when the construction would be finished, Atienza replied, "as soon as possible." He said P20 million has been initially allocated for the project.

The park was "recovered" by some 300 supporters of the mayor who picketed the place on Tuesday.

Winner president Regina Roces-Paterno said City Hall personnel chained and padlocked the park's gates after the rally.

She said they could no longer visit the trees, especially the saplings, some of which still need watering and care.

Paterno also expressed concern about the city's planned construction activity, which she said could disturb the park's ecology.

As the park's developer mandated by a a 1993 memorandum of agreement with City Hall, she said Winner should not be shut out of the park's premises.

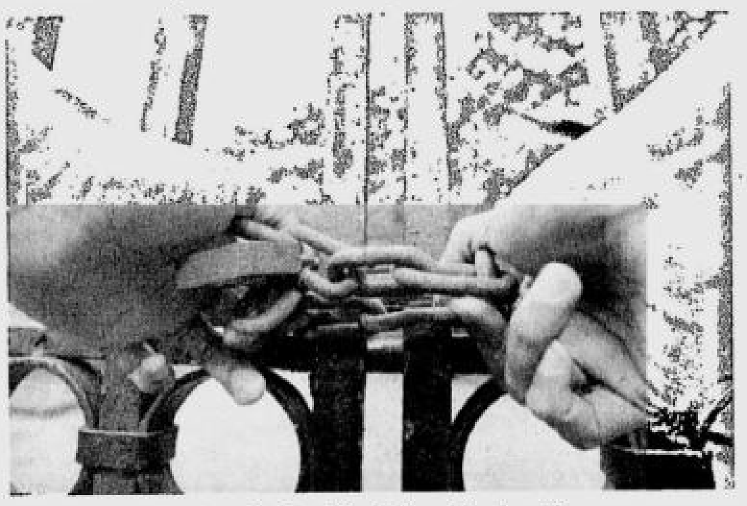
In his weekly press conference last Friday, Atienza confirmed that construction is ongoing in the park, not of the teachers' building but of the Pasig River boardwalk, a portion of which lies in the property's riverbank section.

Workers have planted wooden stakes and even torn down a partition wall separating the park and the adjacent Metropolitan Waterworks Sewerage System compound.

Atienza said that as co-chair of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission, he fully supports the project. The boardwalk, he said, is being spearheaded by the environment department.

But Winner members claimed Atienza has "a lot of say" in the construction efforts because the implementing arm of the project is City Hall itself.

Paterno also insisted that any work inside the park must be coordinated first with Winner.



ARROCEROS Park padlocked, but is it really closed? DENNIS SABANGAN

She stressed that Winner does not intend to claim the park as its own and would willingly turn it over to City Hall after the development of the forest is finished.

Despite the ever-deepening feud with Winner, the mayor said he is still open to a dialog with its members, as long as they do not make City Hall surrender its proprietary and development rights over the park.

"If we can talk, that's good. But if we'd only argue, then I think it's just right that we settle this in court because I'm so tired of debating," he said.

The mayor added that he has been worn out by "hysterical notes, violent reaction and derogatory remarks."

Atienza said he also welcomes the case filed by Winner member Tina Testa regarding the validity of the MOA.

"That's the best thing they (Winner members) could do; this would settle the dispute once and for all in a court of law," he told reporters.

The lawsuit (which Testa filed in her personal capacity and not by the foundation as earlier reported) seeks to stop City Hall from taking over the park and building on it.

Testa also wants the court to rule on the validity of a 1993 memorandum of agreement between Winner and City Hall which gives the former a right to create and develop the park.

The case was raffled to the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 45 Judge Marivic Umali, who set the first hearing at 10 a.m. today.

Atienza said the teachers have all the right to claim the park because the P65 million used to purchase it came from the special education fund.

He said he intends to tear down the gates and fence of the park, build the teachers' center on 2,000 square meters, and convert the rest to a botanical garden and arboretum open to the public at all times.

The mayor also denied that he is to be blamed for the non-approval of the MOA by the City Council when he was then vice mayor.

Atienza said the MOA was not transmitted to the Council by then Mayor Alfredo Lim and was not acted upon by aldermen.

"Officially, the agreement never happened; the city government never even has a record of it," Atienza explained.

The mayor also assured environmentalists that the building will be "environment-friendly."

He said "only the basic requirements" of the teachers will be provided in the building, such as offices of the city school division, conference halls, seminar rooms, a library and a canteen.

Atienza said reports that a dormitory will be included in the park are "imaginary."

MMDA TRAFFIC SCHEME

No road works; answers after Feb.21

By Christian V. Esguerra

HE has not seen enough.

Two weeks into the traffic mess in Metro Manila, Bayani Fernando said yesterday he was not yielding to pressures to lift the suspension of the controversial traffic scheme.

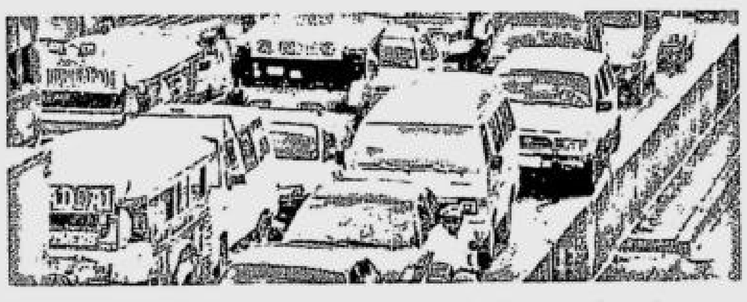
"At this stage, no one's in a position to say if the suspension is effective or not," said the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority chair.

"That's why we're experimenting on the program. All questions will be answered after the suspension ends on Feb. 21."

But Fernando said the public should not readily expect that the MMDA would lift the suspension two weeks from now. "I might even discontinue the traffic scheme afterward," he told the INQUIRER.

If it's any consolation for protesters, he suspended all road works until Feb. 21 and vowed stricter implementation of traffic rules and intensified sidewalk clearing operations.

Fernando said these moves should ease up traffic which was supposedly worsened by the week-old suspension of the UVVRP. He noted that on-going road rehabilitation projects and the laxity of some traffic enforcers have been greatly contributing to traffic congestion in the metropolis.



THIS has become common sight following the lifting of the color-coding scheme. DENNIS SABANGAN

To ensure that buses would not clog major arteries such as Edsa, the MMDA is planning to put up timing devices that would tell bus drivers when to stop loading or unloading passengers.

Fernando's predecessor, Benjamin Abalos Sr., had set a 10-second loading and unloading limit for buses in Edsa but with little success because MMDA men hardly enforced the policy.

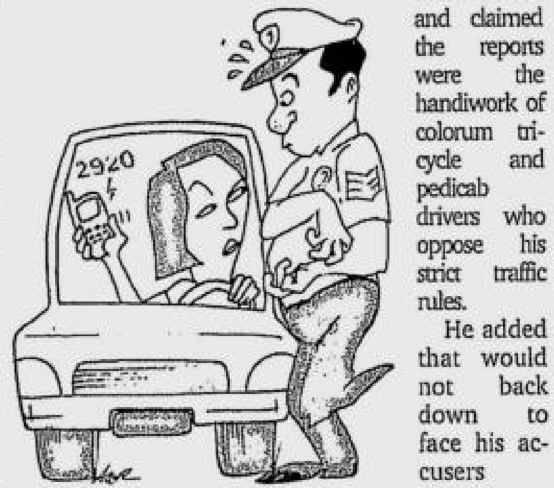
Signposts containing the advisory have since turned into dilapidated obstructions in loading and unloading zones.

Can the magic of texting lessen police corruption?

By Tina Santos

RAMPANT activities of corrupt policemen who extort money from motorists may hopefully be lessened, thanks to the magic of texting.

Latest information showed that the Northern Police District Office has been swarmed with text messages regarding illegal activities of extort cops, particularly in the crowded Bonifacio Monument area in Caloocan City.



Drivers and pedestrians now have the opportunity to fearlessly report unscrupulous policemen after they have found an ally in the Philippine National Police's Text Hotline 2920.

Most of the text messages sent targeted the Monumento area which has been a constant headache for motorists and commuters because of countless sidewalk vendors and illegal passenger jeep and taxi terminals.

Here are samplings of concerned text messages that have reached the PNP hotline: "PNP Gen Ebdane, may pulis d2 sa Monumento nangongotong sa mga bus drivers, De Guzman ang name plate, may owner jeep na stainless walang plaka."

"PNP illegal bus terminal rj bus bonifacio monument circle. Alaga ni hagad erning angeles."

One message, "PNP kotong cop sa sangandaan, caloocan NC Centeno kapal mukha," referred to a certain P03 Centeno assigned at the Sangandaan intersection.

A Police Community Precinct Commander, SP04 Felipe Opena of the Caloocan PCP 10, did not escape the flood of text info after he was singled out as extorting cash from motorists in Phase 7B, Bagong Silang.

Opena predictably denied the allegations when questioned by superiors. He said he has nothing to do with them and claimed the reports were the handiwork of colorum tricycle and pedicab drivers who oppose his strict traffic rules.

He added that would not back down to face his accusers should anyone come forward to file a formal complaint against him.

Aside from the text messages against police allegedly extorting money from the motorists, NPD has also receive several complaints against cops who reportedly serve as protectors of illegal terminals in the city and their civilian assets—jeepney barkers and sampaguita and cigarette vendors—who allegedly front for them.

For the record, higher authorities are never lacking in inputs on the identity and machinations of corrupt policemen.

However, the best the public could do is pray and hope for the best.

Why? Because as several sources would attest to, the drive to rid the city of illegal terminals always turn out to be flush in the pan,"ningas-kugon," because the very same people, the traffic authorities who are supposed to implement the law are the ones who serve as "protectors of these illegal terminals."

Cop who led robbery gang falls in Malabon

MALABON authorities hauled off to jail a police officer assigned at Camp Crame who was allegedly the leader of a robbery holdup gang operating in Northern Metro Manila over the weekend.

Northern Police District Office intelligence and investigation chief Superintended Honorato Donato identified the suspect as PO3 Lutegardo Niedo, detailed at teh Philippine National Police Headquarters at Camp Crame, Quezon City.

Niedo was arrested by combined operatives of the Malabon Police and NPDO. Donato said, Niedo was arrested around 11:30 a.m. Friday in his house at Gozon Compound, Letre Road, Malabon City.

He was arrested on the strength of a warrant issued by Malabon Regional Trial Court Branch 73 Judge Benjamin Antonio on charges of robbery holdup.

PUP stopped from holding selection for new president

A MANILA regional trial judge has temporarily stopped the Board of Regents of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines from holding another selection for the school's new president.

Judge Wilfredo Peralta of the Manila RTC Branch 50 issued a temporary restraining order dated Feb. 5. It would last 20 days.

"(A)n extreme urgency exists to prevent injury that may be sustained by the petitioners," Peralta said in his two-page order.

The judge backed the claims of the petitioners, PUP officials Dante Guevarra, Zenaida Pia and Orlando Molina, who opposed the Board's resolution to conduct a new selection.

The petitioners said the search committee for president, headed by Dante Liban, began its selection process in June 2002 and ended in November. The committee recommended three names.

But the Board, chaired by Ester Garcia of the Commission on Higher Education, later called for a new search, saying the committee failed to pass a resolution of the qualifications of the candidates for president.

This violated PUP's charter and existing laws governing the selection of officilas of state-run schools, the petitioners said. *Jerome Aning*

Lady cop shoots cop-lover; passerby lands in hospital

A 30-YEAR-OLD bystander was seriously wounded after he was hit by a stray bullet fired by a jealous lady cop allegedly at her cop-lover inside a police detachment Saturday morning in Monumento, Caloocan city.

Police were on the hunt for a Northern Police District Office (NPDO) operative, PO1 Emily Garcia, after she reportedly shot PO2 Celso Santos, identified as her boyfriend, with her own service firearm as they argued inside the Bonifacio Monument Circle (BMC) Police Detachment.

The indiscriminate firing resulted in a foot wound for Joseph del Rosario, who was passing by the police station when the shooting occurred.

The pair was allegedly inside the detachment's comfort room at the height of the argument.

Santos surrendered Garcia's .9 mm. service pistol to his superiors, along with clip loaded with three live bullets. *Tina Santos*

Notes on a miracle

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

HE'S a miracle worker who swears by the practical.

You must've done something wrong with that hand, it's no plain co-incidence, he told me, otherwise your hand won't be that bad.

My swollen right hand did not look like a hand. I no longer knew the back of my palm.

For one, the end portion of the middle finger had taken on the shiny, sordid complexion of an eggplant.

It was an old injury, I told Doc, a street bully had doused my niece, Angie, with beer when the poor girl passed their drunken group one afternoon.

There was a one-on-one confrontation after that. The bully said it was an accident. He nevertheless got socked in the nose with a mean right-hand. It was also an accident.

However, the accident resulted into a sprained wrist which did not merit medical attention.

***

But Doc was aghast. Hey, he said, the x-ray showed a chipped wrist bone, the swelling has clogged the veins, the reason for your suffering.

I confessed to Doc that I had actually tried to consult a bone doctor. But the guy, still out in the USA, won't be available until after five days.

That was last Saturday evening, a hellish period when I could not handle anything with my right hand. Each finger movement was a punishment.

Anyway, inasmuch as I was already in his clinic, Doc offered to do something.

We couldn't make remedies by just talking, he explained.

***

Listen, please. Today, a Sunday morning, let me report that I have just finished working with the weights, the first time I had done so in 10-days.

I'm also rushing this thank-you piece using all the fingers of my two hands.

Of course, it was not the first time I had been saved by Doc's miracle touch.

Several friends I had referred to him, with no exception, came out of Doc's clinic at the back of his house off Tejeron in Makati happy and healed. Mon Tulfo, Erwin Castillo, Danny Dalena, my son Chino, a newspaper correspondent from the north, and many more.

Doc has never failed. But I had been reluctant to see him despite the excruciating situation. Reason: he would not accept even a one-peso nominal fee.

***

What are we friends for? he would blurt out and send me away after each successful treatment.

Of course, he functions professionally. He does charge proper fees for each session.

But he's a rarity. Being a specialist on sports injuries, he fortified his traditional knowledge of medicine by studying acupuncture. The blending of the two distinct wisdom, and Doc's inborn gifts and deep faith, have resulted in near-miraculous healing.

For one, Doc is the sort who would tell you outright if your injury is beyond his capacity.

***

The line of patients he had helped could be a virtual who's who in RP sports. Lydia de Vega, Samboy Lim, Bogs Adornado, it's a long list.

There used to be a picture of Doc together with another Doc, Julius Erving, taken in Hong Kong. The framed photo, with a personal thank-you note from the American Hall-of-Famer, had long been pulled down.

In its place now hangs a framed, embossed passage from the Bible.

***

Well, no need to ask Doc how he completes those miracle cures.

There's no secret, he had explained once. All you need to do is make sure you truly know what you practice, then perform your task to the best of your God-given abilities.

The guy is so humble and loving. Lean, with the face of a holy man, this quiet, retiring man would not talk to me again if I ever mentioned his name here.

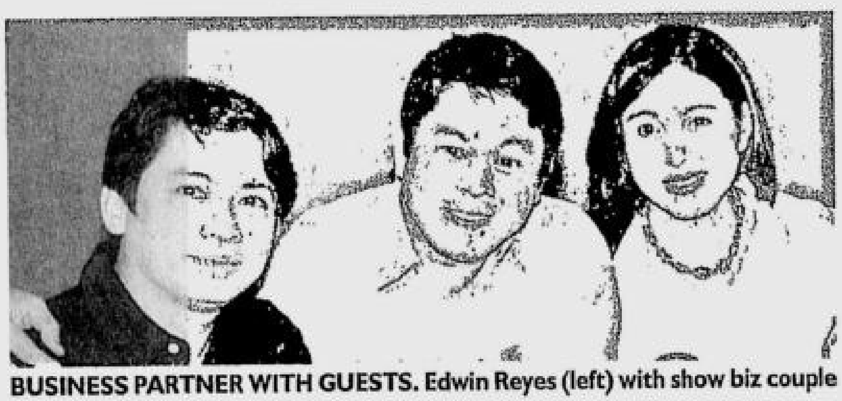
He says he's going on a long vacation. He leaves for the United States on March 1.

He has actually stopped admitting patients, but occasionally offers treatment on very urgent and special cases.

It's good you bothered to come over, he said as he led me to the green, iron gate of his tree-shrouded place.

Come back anytime, he added, if you did not come tonight, gangrene would have set into that bad finger in another 24 hours.

The Hope of Freedom and Justice! Is Back!



BUSINESS PARTNER WITH GUESTS. Edwin Reyes (left) with show biz couple Dennis Padilla and Marjorie Barretto.

MAIN ACTS. Comfort Room owners Candy Pangilinan and Jon Santos

PRINCIPAL SPONSORS. (from left) Barangay chairwoman Constancia Lichauco, Tessie Tomas, Sen. Franklin Drilon, Peque Gallaga and Jon Santos.

Laughter comes from the Comfort Room

WHEN comedians Jon Santos and Candy Pangilinan thought of putting up a comedy bar, they settled for a name as trite yet unusual as Comfort Room.

"We are alone only in the comfort room and we do things nobody knows only there," Jon explains.

The two comedians, who have been friends for a long time now, invested their hard-earned money to fulfill their long-time dream.

"I really wanted to own a bar," says Candy, who gets support from her husband Gilbert Alvarado.

"Jon and I put in a good amount of our savings to this venture, but we can still eat three times a day pa naman. At least now, there's a regular venue where we can perform."

Middle of last year, Candy learned from her friend, I.O. general manager Edwin Reyes that Monk's Dream, the jazz bar at the second floor of One Jupiter Place, would close and move to a different venue (now at Rockwell).

"Edwin offered the place to us and we thought of opening the comedy bar there. Eventually, he also decided to come in as one of the business partners."

Candy simply applied her keen business sense which she has proven in her previous ventures, like the gum balls vending machines under Food Express, Inc., accessories for Bead It and the food carts in various malls.

Jon and Candy put up Comfort Room with other partners -- Charisse Roldan, Vivien Tan, Joel Santos, lawyer James Roldan, Bobby Baquiran and Marco Fortuny.

During the soft opening last month, Candy herself personally attended even to the smallest detail of running the business.

"It's only now that I experienced performing onstage, then checking out the ashtrays on the tables if they have been emptied," she says. "I guess if you really want to run a business, you should work hands-on. That's the only way to make it work."

With Comfort Room, Jon and Candy expect to draw the yuppie crowd not just in Makati, but even from Manila and Quezon City.

"If they're interested to see something new, they can come and check out what we have to offer," Candy says.

Jon, meanwhile, points out Comfort Room deviates from the usual entertainment fare of most comedy bars in town. In lieu of the usual sex-oriented jokes, insulting comedy acts and crass impersonations, Comfort Room will feature stand-up acts, improvisation groups -- much like what viewers see in the syndicated cable show, "Whose Line Is It, Anyway?"

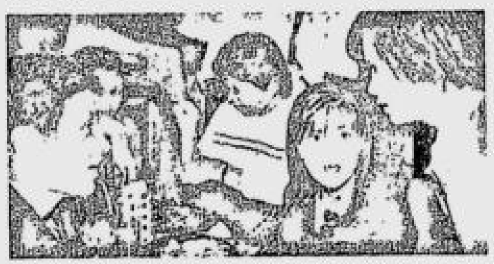
"We don't mean to be snobbish," Jon says. "But we have so much belief in our format. At Comfort Room, laughter is the best medicine (LBM)."

Comfort Room will see Jon and Candy regularly onstage. Other regulars are Gabe Mercado's SPIT (Silly People's Improv Troupe), the Philippine Playhouse Players Company and the Big Bang Cheery.

Last month, even the in-demand, San Francisco-based Rex Navarette, did a special one-night comedy stint there during his brief Manila visit.

On top of the entertainment, there's Mediterranean food and beverage also inside Comfort Room.

Asked how Comfort Room can capture the market for sing-along and stand-up comedy bar habitues, Candy remarks, "Wala kaming dapat agawin. The market is big. We only need to position ourselves in the right way."



LAUGH TRIP. Guests Eric Quizon and Carmina Villaroel chat with Pangilinan.

TWO FOR THE LAUGHTER. Leo Martinez with wife Gina Valenciano.

COMEDIENNE AND THE SEXY STAR. Pangilinan with Joyce Jimenez.

COMFORT ROOM PARTNERS. (first row, from left) Edwin Reyes, Charisse Roldan, Vivien Tan, Joel Santos (second row, from left) lawyer James Roldan, Bobby Baquiran and Marco Fortuny.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

Flavier, too

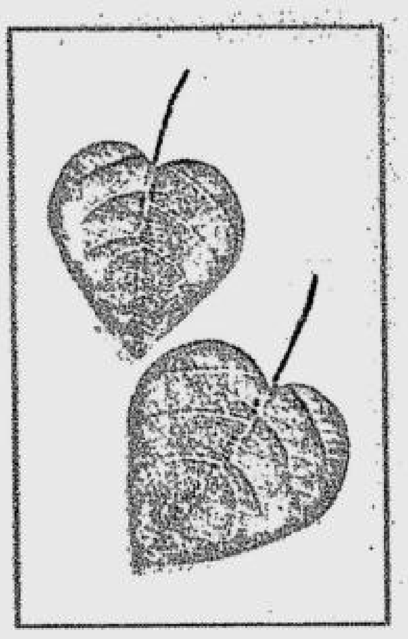
THIS early, a year before the presidential elections next year, a number of candidates have been sending out feelers to the public about their intention to run.

And after Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo announced that she would not run in 2004, the number of presidential hopefuls seems to increase by the day.

The list includes the likes of Sen. Ping Lacson, former Education Secretary Raul Roco, even Sen. Loren Legarda or action king Fernando Poe Jr.

A text message being passed around includes Sen. Juan Flavier to the list. In fact, the former Health Secretary agreed to do an infomercial about health, courtesy of Clusivol. Is this the start of Flavier's multi-media campaign for the presidency?

The text message reads: *"Ngayon na wala na si GMA sa 2004, naroRoco na ang lahat. Tigil na ang Poestahan, buti pa't isip-isiPing muna ang lahat, maErap na baka maChavit pa ang mga plano. Kaya* why not Flavier? *Oo nga, noh...* why not?"



The laugh of your life is waiting at Greenbelt 1

Comedy Club Greenbelt Mall — Join Jon Santos and Candy Pangilinan at the Comedy Club as they reveal the lighter side of showbiz loveteams. Feb 12, 7 pm. Greenbelt 1 Café Row.

Art Film — Catch Madonna in the romantic comedy Swept Away. Greenbelt 1 Art Film, 2nd floor starting Feb 12.

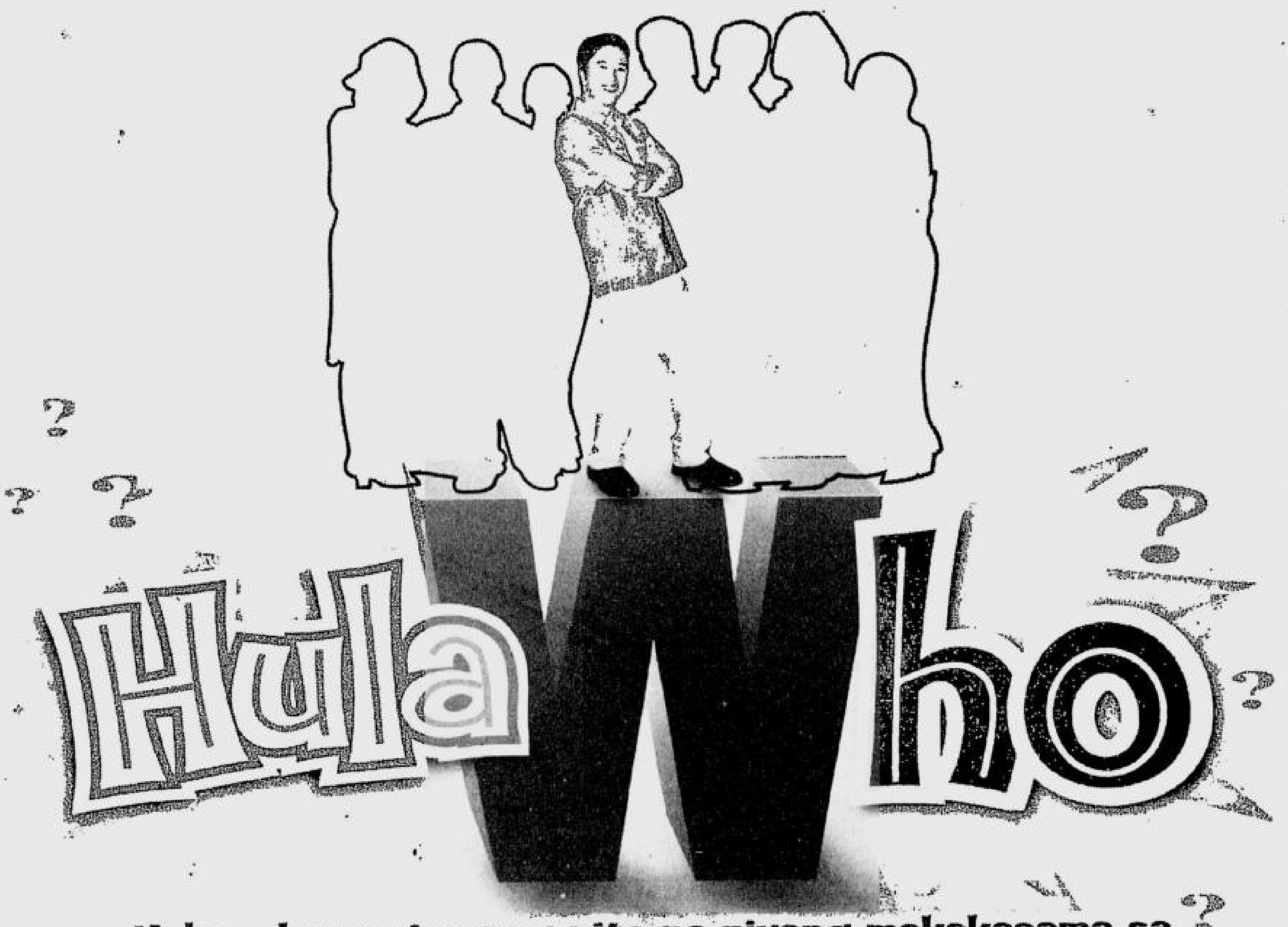
Laugh out loud and fall in love with Nia Long and John Corbett in My Big Fat Greek Wedding. Greenbelt 1 Cinemas starting Feb 12.

Check cinema listing for movie schedule.

AYALA CENTER

Greenbelt. A new experience in dining and entertainment amidst the green Ayala Malls. Because you deserve more!

Eto na si kapatid na Willie!
At hindi siya nag-iisa!



Hulaan kung sino ang pito pa niyang makakasama sa pinakabagong noontime show ng ABS-CBN at baka ikaw na ang mag-uwi ng P50,000!

STEP 1 Piliin kung anong kombinasyon ang gusto mong hulaan.

MAGIC 3 — win P20,000 tax-free — Hulaan kung sino ang DALAWA pang kapatid ni Willie.

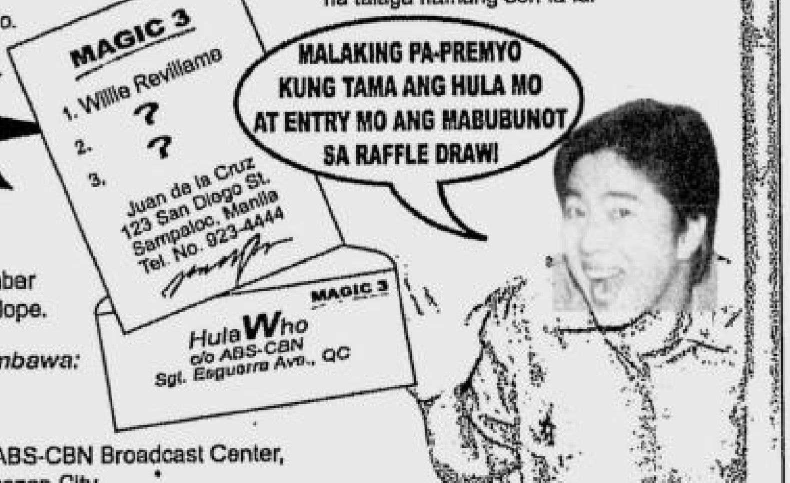
TIRIRITS — win P20,000 tax-free — Hulaan kung sino ang TATLOng kwelang komedyante na makikigulo. Pwedeng lalake, babae o halo-halo.

BABES — win P20,000 tax-free — Hulaan kung sino ang DALAWAng babes na talaga namang ooh-la-la!

TODO — win P50,000 tax-free — Hulaan kung sino ang PITOng ka-barkada ni kapatid na Willie.

STEP 2 Isulat sa papel ang iyong sagot, pangalan, tirahan, telephone number at pirmahan. Ilakip ang iyong sagot sa isang legal-size white envelope. Huwag kalimutang isulat sa harap ng envelope ang kombinasyong sinalihan mo — MAGIC 3, TIRIRITS, BABES o TODO.

halimbawa:



STEP 3 Ihulog ang iyong entries sa mga drop boxes na matatagpuan sa ABS-CBN Broadcast Center, o ipadala sa HULAWHO c/o ABS-CBN, Sgt Esguerra Avenue, Quezon City.

DEADLINE of ENTRIES : 20 February 2003 • Thursday • 12noon

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Schedules are subject to change without prior notice.

AYALA CINEMAS NOW SHOWING

G1 GLORIETTA 1
- 1 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
- 2 I SPY
- 3 HERO
- 4 TWO WEEKS NOTICE

G4 GLORIETTA 4
- 1 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
- 2 THE EYE
- 3 HERO 11:15, 1:30, 3:45, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30
- 4 THE HOT CHICK
- 5 I SPY
- 6 LORD OF THE RINGS: TWO TOWERS
- 7 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

GB1 GREENBELT 1
- 1 OFF KEY (EXCLUSIVE) 12:00, 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00
- 2 TWO WEEKS NOTICE 11:20, 1:35, 3:50, 6:05, 8:20
- Onstage OGIE ALCASID: OA SA PUSO Feb. 13, 14 & 15

GB3 GREENBELT 3
- 1 HERO 12:00, 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00, 11:15
- 2 TWO WEEKS NOTICE 12:00, 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00, 11:15
- 3 I SPY 12:45, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15, 9:25, 11:30
- 4 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN 12:00, 2:45, 5:30, 8:15, 11:00
- 5 THE EYE 12:45, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15, 9:25, 12:30

ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER
- 1 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
- 2 HERO
- 3 I SPY
- 4 RING (ORIG JAPANESE VERSION)
- 5 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

Reserve your seats by texting "SURESEATS G4 (or any Ayala Cinemas) and send to 2333
Or log on to www.sureseats.com
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MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING
EMAIL: mmta@asia.com

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DOLBY)	HERO
2 (SDDS)	THE EYE
3 (DTS)	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
4	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
5 GOLD (DOLBY EX)	THE RING
6 (DOLBY)(SDDS)	I SPY
7 GOLD (DOLBY EX)	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
8	SUKDULAN
9	BELOW
10	HOT CHICK

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	
2	
3 (DTS)	
4	FEMME FATALE
5	
6 (DTS)	
Golden Pearl THX	

Masagana CINEMA ①②&③
(Pasay) tel 833.3290, 833.3274

1	SUKDULAN
2	I SPY
3	BALAT SIBUYAS

Starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986

1	I SPY
2	BELOW
3	BALAT SIBUYAS
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX)	HERO
5	SUKDULAN

METROPOLIS Star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285

1	BELOW
2	BALAT SIBUYAS
3	HERO
4	I SPY
5	SUKDULAN
6	TWO WEEKS NOTICE

M Star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas) tel 873.5004

1	ANALYZE THAT
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

PREMIERE CINEMA
THX
(Makati City) tel 751.2010 to13

HERO

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	THE RING
2	HULA MO HULI KO

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL INC
tel 930.9515

1	RESERVE
2	BALAT SIBUYAS
3	RESERVE

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	I SPY
2	RESERVE
3	BALAT SIBUYAS
4	RESERVE

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (SDDS)	HERO
4	BALAT SIBUYAS
5	BELOW
6	SUKDULAN
7 (DTS)	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
8 (SDDS)	I SPY
9 (DOLBY)	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

Gotesco Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	RESERVE

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 365.7928

1	BALAT SIBUYAS
2	SUKDULAN
3	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
4 (SDDS)	I SPY
5	RESERVE
6 (DOLBY)	HERO
7 (DTS)	BELOW
8	HALF PAST DEAD
9	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0082

1	BALAT SIBUYAS
2 (SDDS)	I SPY
3 (DTS)	SUKDULAN
4 (DOLBY)	HERO
5	BELOW

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	HERO
2	SUKDULAN
3 (DTS)	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
4	BALAT SIBUYAS
5 (SDDS)	I SPY

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	BALAT SIBUYAS

Sampaquita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	SUKDULAN

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	BALAT SIBUYAS
Lords	BALAT SIBUYAS
Jennet	

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	HERO
2	SUKDULAN
3	I SPY
4	TWO WEEKS NOTICE

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	I SPY
2	HERO
3	BALAT SEBUYAS
4	SUKDULAN
5	TWO WEEKS NOTICE

FRC Cinema
(Talaba Bacoor Cavite)

1	
2	

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1	BALAT SEBUYAS
2	SUKDULAN

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta
MALL CINEPLEX 7
tel 911.3101 loc. 821,8242,8400

1	SUKDULAN
2	THE RING
3 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	I SPY
4 (SDDS)	HERO
5 (DTS)	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
6	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
7	BELOW

FarmersPlaza CINEMAS
tel 911.3101 loc. 821,8242,8400

1	BALAT SIBUYAS
2	I SPY

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
TEL. (049) 837-0920, 534-2185

1	I SPY
2	SUKDULAN
3 (DTS)	HERO

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	SUKDULAN
2 (DTS)	I SPY
3 (DOLBY)	HERO
4	TWO WEEKS NOTICE

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	SUKDULAN
2 (DOLBY)	I SPY
3 (DTS)	HERO
4	TWO WEEKS NOTICE

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	THE RING
2	HOT CHICK
3 (DOLBY)	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4	

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729

1	SPECIAL SCREENING
2	SPECIAL SCREENING
3 (DOLBY)	THE RING
4 (DTS)	SUKDULAN

Magic Star Cinema
(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305

1 (DOLBY)	THE RING
2 (DTS)	SUKDULAN
3	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	AUSTIN POWER
2	BALAT SIBUYAS
3 (DTS)	SUKDULAN
4	UNFAITFUL CONCUBINE

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	HERO
2	I SPY
3 (DTS)	SUKDULAN
4	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
5	KERIDA

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	HERO
2	SUKDULAN
3	TWO WEEKS NOTICE

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558

1	HERO
2	I SPY
3	TWO WEEKS NOTICE

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1	THE RING
2	SUKDULAN
3 (DTS)	HOT CHICK
4	EIGHT MILE

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	RESERVE
2 (DTS)	RESERVE

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	LORD OF THE RING
2	SUKDULAN
3	THE RING

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	SUKDULAN
2	THE RING
3	LORD OF THE RING
4	ANLYZE THAT

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045)887-6001 TO 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	I SPY
2	SUKDULAN
3 (DTS ES)	TRY SEVENTEEN
4	MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING

Cine Nepo Mall
(Angeles City) te (045) 887-0121

1	TRY SEVENTEEN
2	REPLIKATE
3 (DOLBY)	I SPY
4 (DTS)	ONF HOUR PHOTO

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY dts SDDS

Festival Cinema
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Festival Supermall
Filinvest - Alabang

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sandra BULLOCK hugh GRANT

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NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR
4173868

1	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
2	SUKDULAN
3	HERO
4	BELOW
5	I SPY
6	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
7	BALAT SIBUYAS
8	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

SM CENTERPOINT
7149522 -7161416

1	I SPY
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
4	BALAT SIBUYAS
5	HERO
6	HOT CHICK
7	RING (JAPANESE)
8	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
9	SUKDULAN
10	BELOW

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1	TRY SEVENTEEN
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3	HALF PAST DEAD
4	I SPY
5	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
6	SUKDULAN
7	HERO
8	BELOW
9	BALAT SIBUYAS
10	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
11	HOT CHICK
12	THE RING

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3	HOT CHICK
4	HERO
5	I SPY
6	HERO
7	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
8	RING (JAPANESE)
9	THE EYE
10	BELOW
11	TRY 17
12	SUKDULAN

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401

1	RING (HOLLYWOOD)
2	I SPY
3	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
4	HERO
5	THE EYE
6	HERO
7	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
8	BELOW
9	SUKDULAN
10	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
11	HOT CHICK
12	TWO WEEKS NOTICE

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1	BELOW
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3	HOT CHICK
4	SUKDULAN
5	THE EYE
6	HERO
7	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
8	I SPY

SM SOUTHMALL
8006888

1	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
2	BELOW
3	HERO
4	I SPY
5	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
6	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
7	SUKDULAN
8	THE EYE
9	RING (JAPANESE)
10	BALAT SIBUYAS

SM CITY CEBU
2313876

1	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
2	HOT CHICK
3	TRY SEVENTEEN
4	ONE HOUR PHOTO
5	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
6	SUKDULAN
7	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
8	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

1	SUKDULAN
2	CLOSED
3	HOT CHICK
4	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
5	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
6	ANALYZE THAT
7	CLOSED
8	BANGKERO

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1	I SPY
2	ONE HOUR PHOTO
3	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4	BANGKERO
5	TRY SEVENTEEN
6	SUKDULAN

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294875

1	SUKDULAN
2	I SPY
3	HERO
4	TWO WEEKS NOTICE

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1	I SPY
2	SUKDULAN
3	HERO
4	BALAT SIBUYAS

SM CITY DAVAO
2976998

1	TRY SEVENTEEN
2	HEAVEN
3	VAMPS
4	HOT CHICK
5	ANALYZE THAT
6	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

SM BICUTAN
776-3055

1	HERO
2	SUKDULAN
3	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
4	I SPY

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
859-2884

1	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
2	ONE HOUR PHOTO
3	HOT CHICK
4	8 MILE

THE PODIUM CINEMA
18 ADB Avenue Ortigas Center Mandaluyong City
633-0976

1	HERO 11:15 MF/11:45 /2:00/4:15/6:30/8:45/ 10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:45 END
2	TWO WEEKS NOTICE 11:15 MF/11:45 /2:00/4:15/6:30/8:45/ 10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:45 END

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MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS
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NOW SHOWING

Galleria
632- 9115- 16
633- 7641 loc. 279

THX	HERO
2	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
3	HERO
4	BELOW
5	I SPY
6	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
7	LORD OF THE RINGS
8	THE EYE
9	HOT CHICK
10	SUKDULAN

MATINEE PRICE: P90 THX cinema P75 1level cinemas
Mon.- Fri. / 10am- 4pm (EXCEPT HOLIDAYS)

Ermita
536 -7809- 12

1	HERO
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3	BELOW
4	THE EYE
5	SUKDULAN
6	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
7	I SPY

Metro East - Marcos hway
682- 8193 / 8280

1	THE RING (US VERSION)
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	I SPY
5	HERO
6	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
7	BELOW
8	SUKDULAN

Novaliches
935- 3229 - 30

1	HERO
2	RING (JAPANESE VERSION)
3	I SPY
4	SUKDULAN
5	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
6	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
7	BELOW
8	HOT CHICK

Malabon Citisquare
288-0985 / 288-2575

1	HERO
2	SUKDULAN
3	I SPY
4	TWO WEEKS NOTICE

Star Mills- Sn. Fernando, Pamp.
875- 1927
961- 5318 / 5270

1	ONE HOUR PHOTO
2	SUKDULAN
3	TRY SEVENTEEN
4	I SPY
5	BANGKERO
6	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

Imus
471- 8188 / 875- 3838

1	HERO
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3	I SPY
4	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
5	SUKDULAN
6	BALAT SIBUYAS

Sta. Rosa Laguna
049-8370907

1	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
2	HERO
3	I SPY
4	SUKDULAN
5	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

Bacolod
441- 0453 / 0459

1	LORD OF THE RINGS II
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3	HOT CHICK
4	ANALYZE THAT
5	SUKDULAN
6	BANGKERO

Iloilo
336- 8077 - 78

1	LORD OF THE RING II
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3	HOT CHICK
4	ANALYZE THAT
5	SUKDULAN
6	BANGKERO

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Balut, featured on 'World's Freakiest Foods'

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WE viewed a very different kind of food show on TV, and we were glad we caught it. The program's title, "World's Freakiest Foods," says it all: the show's staffers travel all over the globe, taping features on unique exotic and even bizarre cuisine.

Alligator steak, anyone? Fried racoon is regarded as a delicacy in some places. Sauteed snake, fried crickets, worms coating an apple dipped in honey-why not?

The point is, these unusual food items aren't considered freaky in their native locales, they're just ways to fill one's tummy - inexpensively.

That, it turns out, is the main reason why people go far unusual foods, not really because they're extra-healthy, have an aphrodisiac effect, etc. Some places in the world are so impoverished that people have to eat practically anything that moves!

Like muskrats. Yes, there's a restaurant in the States that specializes in serving up those rodents-but, have no fear, they're vegetarians, so they're clean. Also, they're especially bred to taste like anything you want. - Huh?!

It's done by limiting their food intake to the floor you desire. For example, if you want your broiled muskrat to taste like oranges, it's ends up on your table.

Mmmm! Please pass the muskrat al' orange!

By the way, that technique works for cockroaches, too. Oh, never mind.

Tantalizing trivia: In their part of the States, there's practically no fish, mostly muskrats, so the Catholic bishops there have allowed the ingestion of muskrat in lieu of fish during lent!

What do you do with information like that? Stick it in your muskrat, and eat it.

What does muskrat taste like? "Gamy, a little bony, but very good." -We'll take your word for it!

If muskrat is too much for you, how can you even begin to understand the culinary appeal of - bull's testicles? Yes, they're popular in another part of the states, where they even hold an annual five-day Testicle Festival. Why is it so popular? "Makes you kinda frisky." Down, boy.

Incidentally, the premiere telecast of "World's Freakiest Foods" devoted the most airtime to a feature on—the Philippines balut. Yes, the snack that we ingest as casually as you please is regarded as unusual, weird freaky and even shocking in some parts of the uninitiated western world.

The program excitedly described it as "unborn duck in its shell" and " a hardboiled egg that fully-formed duck fetus - a delicacy in the Philippines." Well, sure - what's so shocking about that?

To its credit, after it got over its shock tactics, the show shared a lot of interesting information about balut. First, a Filipino raved: It's a complete meal! Sip the top - that's the soup. Then, the egg yolk. After that, you get to the chick. It's full of protein and calcium - so, it's complete!"

The show next detailed how balut is prepared: Six days after the incubation process is started, the embryo is perceptible. By Week Two, the mass is larger. Some connoisseurs prefer to stop the process and eat the half-formed chick after only 12 or 14 days. But most wait the full 18 days-perfection! It's then boiled and packed for imme diate sale. "Baluuuuut!

A final note: the Chinese are generally credited for bringing balut culture to the Philippines. "Different versions of the snack are found allo ver Southeast Asia where Chinese are found." Thanks for that gastro-socio-anthro-geographical tidbit!

After we caught that initial telecast of "World's Freakiest Foods" on a cable channel, we looked for it the following week, but failed to view the follow-up show. We're still trying to locate the program and once we do, we'll share the programming information with you.

Featured singers

THE EXCHANGE Bar, Richmonde Hotel's cozy lounge, features these entertainers this month: Monday's Charm Garcia sings jazz, soul and R&B. Tuesdays, Yamani performs music from the '60s to the '90s. Wednesdays, Arthur Manutag croons love songs. Carmela Cuneta is also featured.

Thursdays, Judy Baduria sings 80s and 90s tunes. Fridays, Mike and Ca rol Villamor do standard, jazz, Latin, Broadway and modern numbers. Saturdays, pianist-singer Guido Irinco performs.

Singing duo revives partnership

From page A31

band had a song entry, "Nothing I want More," which was again interpreted by the Eugene and Louie. It placed second in the Metro Pop tilt.

When the song was made to compete in the Seoul Song Festival in Korea, Eugene and Louie earned the grand prize for it.

Together, they have done countless shows abroad, where they were always expected to sing their winning piece.

"The audience felt shortchanged if we don't include the song in our repertoire," Eugene says.

Eugene marvels at how Louie has preserved her voice all these years.

"It takes some kind of discipline to do that," Eugene says. "I have seen some of our contemporaries having difficulty reaching a high note when it used to be an easy thing for them to do. I guess mahirap din iyong ipinamamahinga ng matagal ang boses. It gets rusty.

"BETTER TOGETHER." Eugene Villaluz and Louie Reyes reunite onstage at Merk's Bistro.

"I make it a point to sing even in small venues. It's not for money but for the good exercise my voice needs. Louie's passion for singing is truly amazing. Distance is never a problem for her. I have seen her fly to Dubai just to perform. She and her family are based in Los Angeles, where she teaches."

Eugene, whose only requirements for show are good musicians and good sound, believes he has reached the peak of maturity as a singer. He likens it to wine which gets better as it ages. Eugene looks forward to a busy year, which will include a musical at the Cultural Center of the Philippines ("Three Penny Opera") in April and a fund-raising project in May.

The reunion concert next month at CCP will also feature Hadji Alejandro, Pat Castillo and Tillie Moreno. It is a repeat of their show last September at Music Museum.

At present, Eugene is focused on the songs he and Louie will dish out at Merk's Bistro tonight. Their repertoire will consist of unforgettable love songs.

On Valentine's Day, Richard Merk takes center stage at Merk's, as he matches the electrifying performance of Mai Castro with Onda Latin in "Latin Night Valentine."

It's A Date!
They are HERE and they long to whisper in your ears
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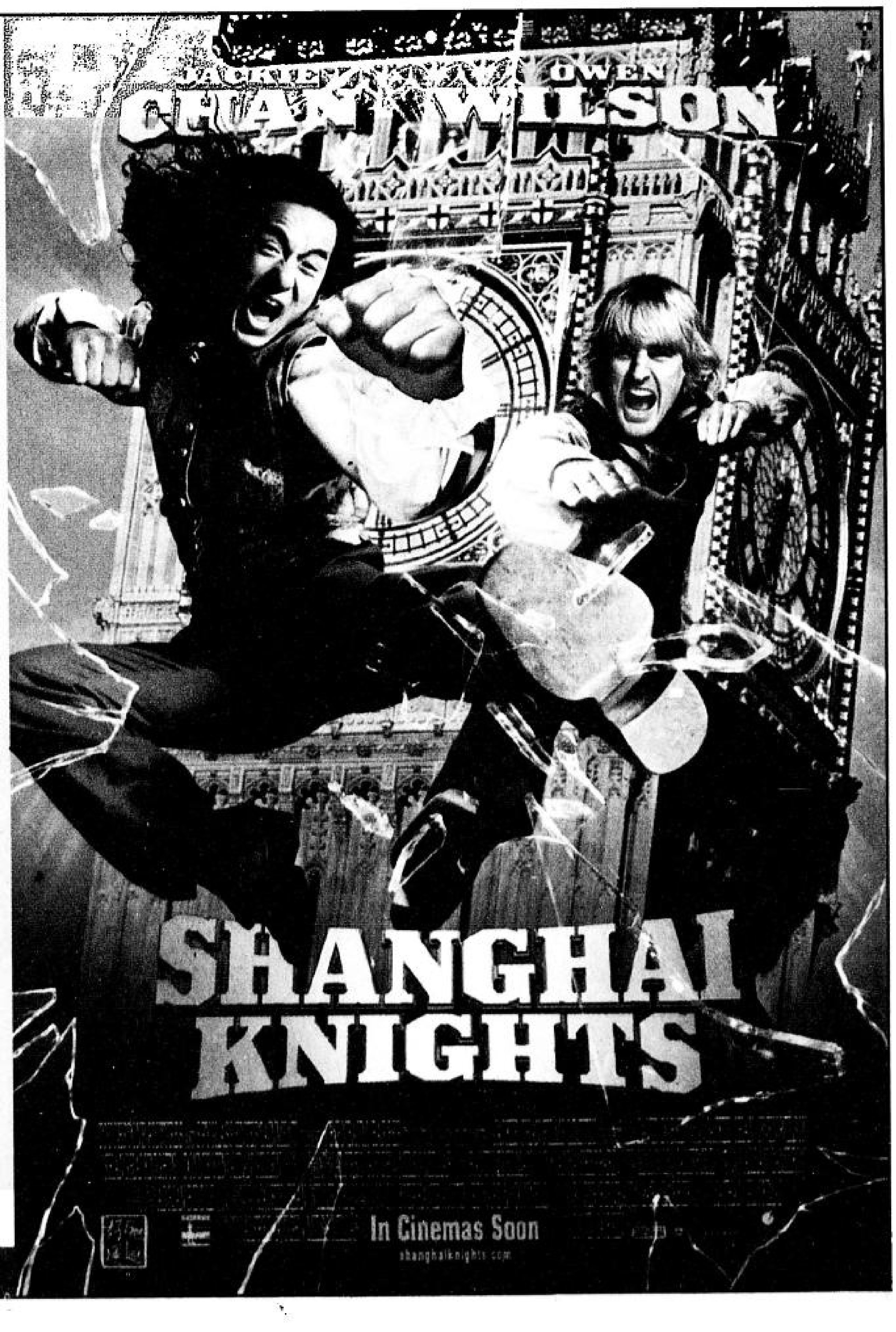
REGULAR SHOWING ON FEBRUARY 12



Martin graces Cebu Pacific welcome festivities at Singapore's Changi Airport

CEBU Pacific recently feted distinguished guests and airline officials in Singapore with a whole-day marathon of festive activities that kicked off at the Changi Airport and adjourned at Singapore's Grand Plaza Park Royale.

The red-carpet welcome was led by the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore. The event featured a lion dance, ceremonial gift-giving and cake cutting, as well as delectable refreshments at the business aviation center of the Changi Airport.

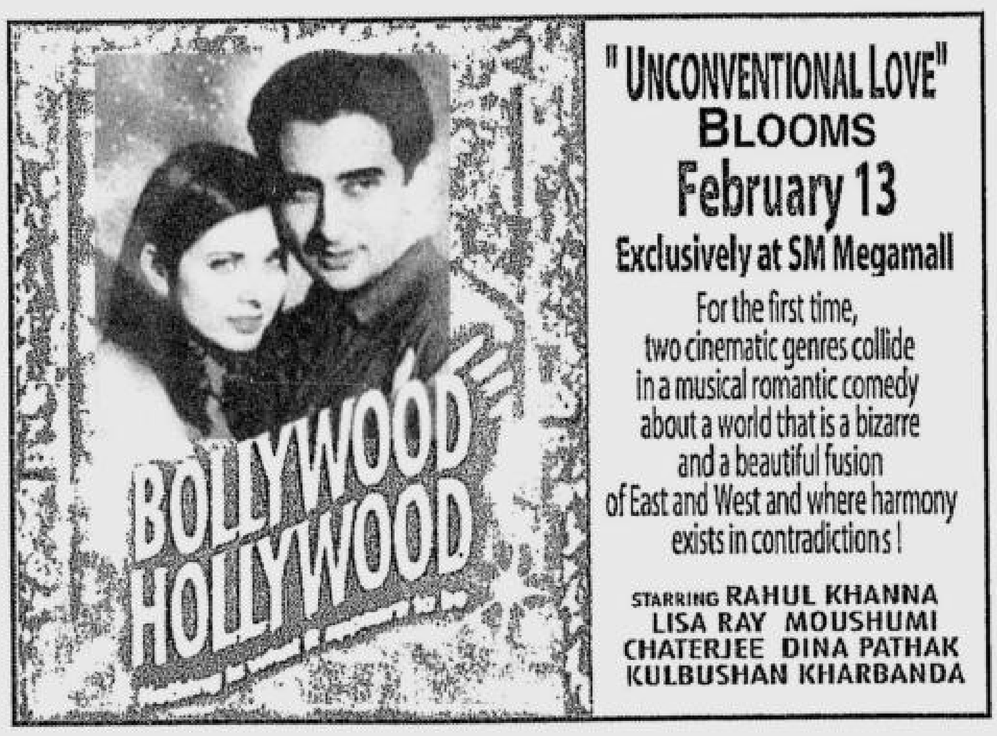
Philippine Ambassador to Singapore Ernesto Llamas, with spouse Macaria and Consul General Minda Cruz, met their countrymen and hosts, as Cebu Pacific's flight attendants entertained the entourage with folk dances like "Maglalatik," "Kalapati" and the "Subli."

Sharing in the celebration were Singapore Ambassador Jacky Foo, Bureau of Immigration and Deportation Commissioner Andrea Domingo, JG Summit patriarch John Gokongwei and Cebu Pacific head honcho Lance Gokongwei.

Also present at the soiree was concert king Martin Nievera, fresh from a successful concert at Singapore. He gamely rendered songs and even did a duet with talented Cebu Pacific flight attendant, Pam Labayen.

Other showstoppers include dapper TV personality Rico Hizon from BBC Singapore, JG Summit power women Lily Ngo Chua and Patricia Go-Nisce, Salomon Smith Barney's pretty Triccie Luchangco and smart-and-sassy Margaret Cu of Merryll Lynch.

SINGAPORE SLING. Concert King Martin Nievera (left) with Cebu Pacific president Lance Gokongwei and flight attendant Pam Labayen.



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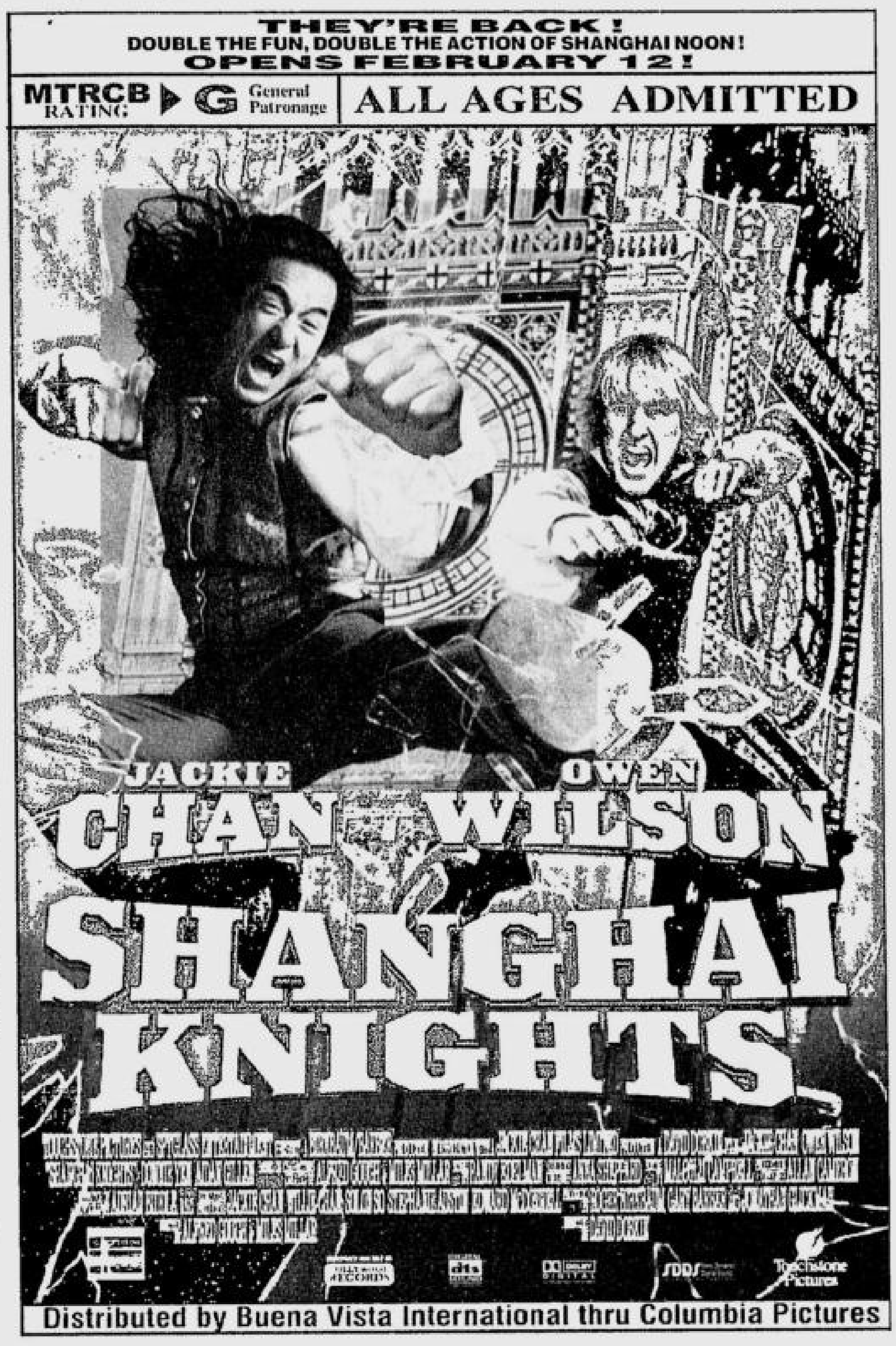
OPENS WEDNESDAY!
MTRCB RATING ▶ G General Patronage ALL AGES ADMITTED
1. Truly a magnificent film, Bravo, Magnifico! – Butch Francisco, The Phil Star
2. The first really good movie of 2003! – Lito B. Zulueta, Philippine Daily Inquirer
3. Magnifico is Magnificent! – Mario Hernando, Malaya
4. "Pang-Oscar ang kalidad ng Magnifico" – Archie de Calma, Imbestigador
5. "Would that we all support this movie with lots of heart and the strength of its quite and hopeful honesty." – Rina Jimenez-David, Philippine Daily Inquirer
6. The whole thing is very Pinoy and is a particularly welcome intrusion in our times when people are despairing in this country.– Conrado de Quiros, Philippine Daily Inquirer
LORNA TOLENTINO
Ms. GLORIA ROMERO Ms. CELIA RODRIGUEZ AMY AUSTRIA
MARK GIL CHERRY PIE PICACHE
ALBERT MARTINEZ TONTON GUTIERREZ
DANILO BARRIOS
JIRO MANIO as
MAGNIFICO
Introducing
GIRLIE SEVILLA
Walang katumbas ang wagas na pagmamahal
ALLISON VII GONZALES
JON ROMANO & SUSAN AFRICA
ISABELLA DE LEON
DINDIN LLARENA JOSEPH ROBLE
Theme song sung by:
GARY VALENCIANO
Directed by Maryo J. de los Reyes, DGPI
A Violett Films Production
RELEASED THROUGH GMA FILMS



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Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

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RUFA MAE quinto
Directed by Al Tantay

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Louie C. Camino

Singing duo revives partnership

By Remy M. Umerez
Contributor

IT WILL be a week-long love celebration at Merk's Bar Bistro at Greenbelt 3 starting Feb. 10, with a special show, "Better Together," reuniting the incomparable tandem of Louie Reyes and Eugene Villaluz, formerly of the New Minstrels.

It was Merk's owner Richard Merk, who thought of the idea of bringing back Eugene and Louie onstage, upon learning that Louie is coming home next month for a reunion show. He wanted her to come home earlier and be the opening salvo of the week-long gigs in his bistro.

"That's why Louie scheduled her arrival earlier," says Eugene after rendering "This Is the Moment" from the Broadway musical "Jekyll and Hyde."

The song is only a prelude to what one can expect from their forthcoming show.

The title, "Better Together," cannot be more apt because the two have been singing together for a long time, so that they can't think of one without the other.

Who are the Minstrels and how did the singing partnership of Louie and Eugene start?

"The year was 1972," Eugene recalls. The original members were five Bedans who love to do folk singing. It was a hobby then. After graduation, the three guys went on to pursue their goals.

"Kaming dalawa na lang ni Cesar ang natira and we wanted to continue with our singing on a professional level. We started to audition interested persons to join."

The audition produced four girls and two more boys, who would later comprise the New Minstrels. They are Louie Reyes, Anette Belen, Aida Balmaceda and Aileen Dolina. The other two men are Ding Mercado and Vic Baclagon.

In 1981, the New Minstrels interpreted the song "Ikaw, Tayo, Magkakapatid" for the Metro Pop Song Festival. When the country was invited to compete in a song festival in Ottawa, Canada, the song was chosen to be the entry.

However, when financial constraints didn't allow the entire group to go to Canada, they handpicked Louie and Eugene to interpret the song. That was the birth of a fantastic duo which has remained unmatched even to this day.

Another Metropop experience proved controversial for the singing pair who has embarked on a career of their own after the New Minstrels had disbanded.

Tillie Moreno of the Circus

SINGING/A29

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Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7	
Ali 1	SUKDULAN
Ali 2	THE RING
Ali 3	I SPY
Ali 4	HERO
Ali 5	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
Ali 6	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
Ali 7	BELOW
FARMERS PLAZA CINEMAS	
Farmers 1	BALAT SIBUYAS
Farmers 2	I SPY
ARANETA COLISEUM	
FEB 13	RONAN KEATING CONCERT
FEB 14	SIDE A AND FREESTYLE
FEB 15	ABBA TRIBUTE CONCERT
ELEPHANT WORLD	
FEB 11	10 AM / 3 PM
FEB 12	10 AM / 3 PM
FEB 13	10 AM / 3 PM

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HERO P13 12:40,3:00,5:20, 7:40,10:00	HOT CHICK P13 12:45,2:55,5:05, 7:15,9:30	TWO WEEKS NOTICE P13 11:15, 1:30, 3:45, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30

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ODEON	BALAT SIBUYAS
ODEON-2	MASARAP ANG UNANG KAGAT / NAIIBANG HAYOP
ROBEN	BALAT SIBUYAS
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY KIDS 2 MASTER DISGUISE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	SUKDULAN
CORONET B	TUXEDO / TEENAGE SEDUCTION
QUEZON-1	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
REMAR	BALAT SIBUYAS
REMAR-2	SUKDULAN
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	SUKDULAN
B	BALAT SIBUYAS
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	I SPY
CINEMA-2	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	BALAT SIBUYAS
CINEMA-2	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
CINEMA-3	THE RING
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	FEMME FATALE
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
CINEMA-6	LASTIKMAN
CINEMA-7	8 MILE
CINEMA-8	HOT CHICK
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HERO
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	I SPY
CINEMA-12	SUKDULAN
CINEMA-14	BELOW
CINEMA-15	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	DAVID
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	CHANG [illegible]
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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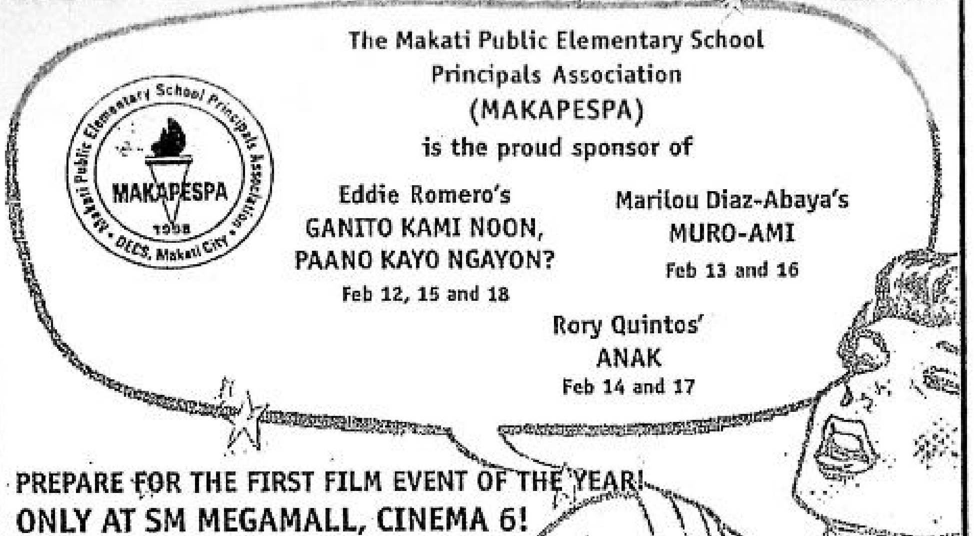
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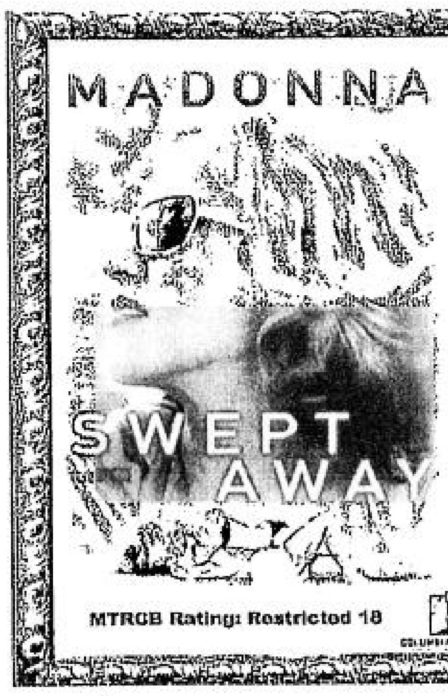
MADONNA
SWEPT AWAY
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Laugh out loud & fall in love
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Imagine being shipwrecked on a beautiful island - with someone you really can't stand.
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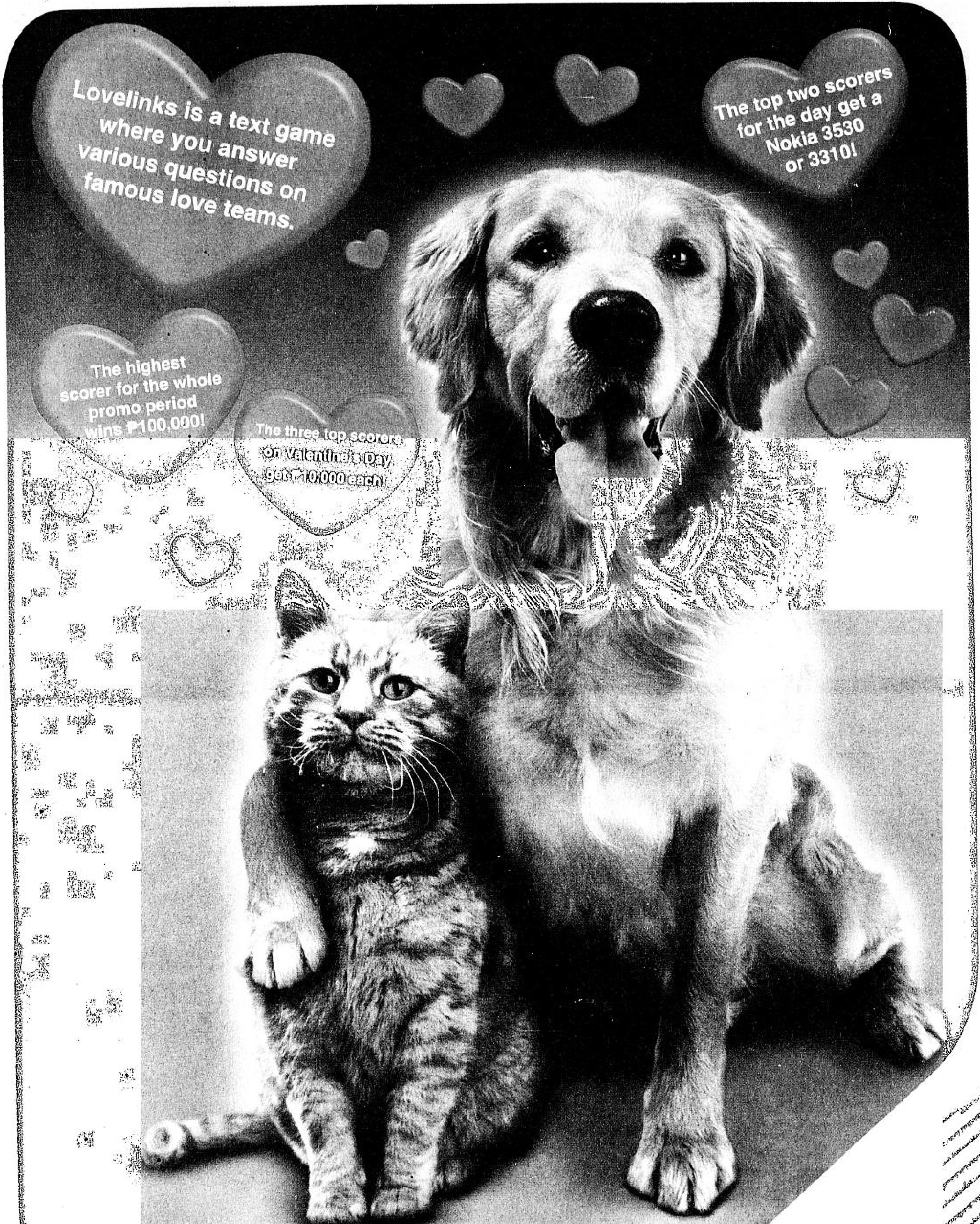
OPENS FEBRUARY 12
MTRCB Rating: Restricted 18
COLUMBIA PICTURES NOKIA INQUIRER

Simply lucky in love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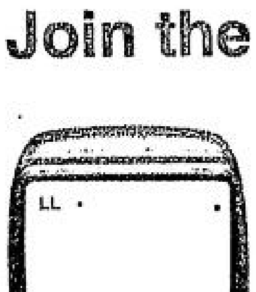
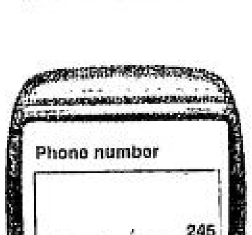

LL
Options Clear

Type in Lovelinks or LL


Phone number
245
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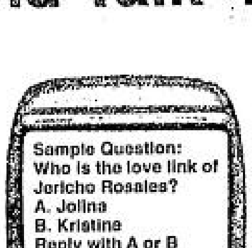
Send to 245


Sample Question:
Who is the love link of Jericho Rosales?
A. Jolina
B. Kristine
Reply with A or B
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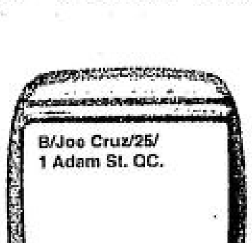
You'll be given questions about famous love teams.


B/Joe Cruz/25/
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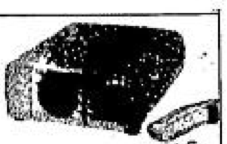
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PETROCHEM TARIFF CUT DELAY

3 countries seek compensation from RP

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

SINGAPORE, Malaysia and Thailand have formally asked the Philippines for compensation for potential trade losses arising from Malacañang's decision to exempt petrochemical resins from the Asean Free Trade Area tariff cuts and to maintain the protection on the petrochemical industry up to 2004.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas said his agency was currently reviewing the demands of Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand.

Roxas said the three countries should prove that they were principal suppliers of resins used in making plastic products and that the tariff cut deferment has robbed them of potential gains arising from the implementation of a regional trading block in Asean.

Thailand and Malaysia have integrated petrochemical industries that would benefit from the increased market access offered by Afta. However, they account for a small amount of the Philippines' resin imports. Singapore is the country's single biggest supplier but the Philippines can argue that the island state was merely a big trader of resins rather than a manufacturer.

The Philippines had invoked the Afta protocol that allowed members to delay the tariff cuts on industries that would have a hard time coping with a torrent of imports under Afta.

The Philippines reduced the duty on resins from 15 percent to 10 percent starting this year. The new level, however, is off its pledge to cut the duty to 5 percent (goods made and traded in Afta should be charged no more than 5 percent).

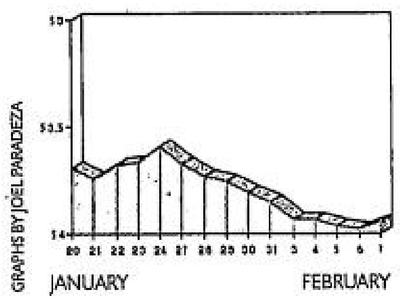
Malacañang agreed to the tariff cut delay on condition that the petrochemical industry should build a naphtha cracker over the next 24 months to be more competitive with other Asean countries.

The only other country that invoked the protocol was Malaysia which requested for a delay in the

3 COUNTRIES/ B3

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



GRAPHS BY JOEL PARADEZA

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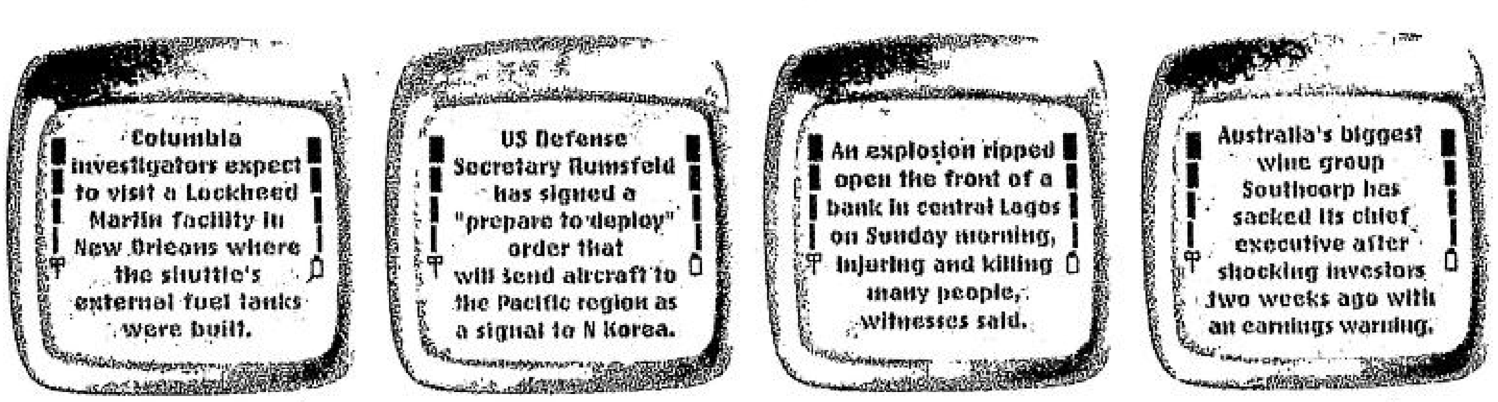
Columbia investigators expect to visit a Lockheed Martin facility in New Orleans where the shuttle's external fuel tanks were built.
US Defense Secretary Rumsfeld has signed a "prepare to deploy" order that will send aircraft to the Pacific region as a signal to N Korea.
An explosion ripped open the front of a bank in central Lagos on Sunday morning, injuring and killing many people, witnesses said.
Australia's biggest wine group Southcorp has sacked its chief executive after shocking investors two weeks ago with an earnings warning.

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Neda chief calls for more direct flights to ME

By Doris C. Dumlao

ECONOMIC Planning Secretary Romulo Neri said on Friday he would push for the opening up of more direct flights to and from the Middle East and Europe to service the needs of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).

Neri said the move was long overdue considering that OFWs in the Middle East have been helping the economy by sending millions of dollars in remittances.

By providing the OFWs with more choices of airlines at competitive ticket prices, Neri said OFWs would be able to conserve their earnings.

"The least we can do is to support them with cheaper and more convenient airline services," Neri said.

Based on data from the Civil Aeronautics Board, the average annual load factor of Middle East-based carriers such as Emirates stood at about 93 percent in 2002 compared to the normal range of between 60 and 70 percent.

He also cited reports from the Department of Labor and Employment which said that OFWs in the Middle East usually find it difficult getting bookings due to lack of airline seats.

"There are 1.2 million OFWs in the Middle East and 450,000 in Europe. They are serviced by only 32 flights per week out of Manila to the Middle East. In contrast, there are approximately 960,000 OFWs in Asia serviced by 320 flights per week," Neri said.

Neri said increasing the frequencies of airlines flying in and out of the country would induce greater competition that would in turn lower rates, boost the tourism industry, create more jobs and enable OFWs to visit their relatives in the country more frequently.

Aside from the Middle East and Europe, Neri said he would like to increase flights to Korea, Japan, China, Australia and New Zealand.

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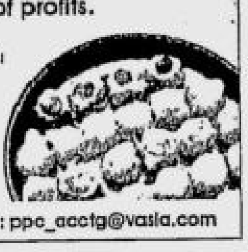

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Physicians, heal thyselves

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

THE ASIAN Hospital has gotten itself out of the financial ICU after receiving an 11th-hour transfusion from Insular Life and US-based heart surgeon Jorge Garcia.

According to the grapevine, Garcia himself pumped in no less than P100 million, the money he raised by liquidating some assets in the United States. Insular was supposed to have committed P125 million for operating capital.

Garcia has also assumed the presidency of the Asian Hospital, the holding company, and hired an American expatriate from Bahrain, Bernard Koval, to assume the CEO position for the medical facility.

Garcia's ex-patient, Insular Life chair Vicente Ayllon, has assumed the chairmanship of the hospital's holding company as well.

According to the pro-Garcia grapevine, the noted surgeon caused the hospital to disengage itself from the reported takeover by the group of telecom tycoon Antonio Cojuangco after realizing that Cojuangco's Bank of Commerce was extending another loan, not equity, to the cash-strapped medical center.

On top of that, the P50 million that the Bank of Commerce was willing to extend would first have to be secured by Garcia's entire shareholdings.

Even before infusing P100 million, Garcia had already sunk P165 million, equivalent to an 8.59-percent stake, into the Asian Hospital.

It is not immediately clear who will now take up the 32 percent bloc held by Vista Medical Management, the Singaporean fund whose decision to sell out triggered a boardroom coup, that the Cojuangco group had planned to acquire.

In the meantime, a consortium of bank creditors is planning to nominate two directors/observers to the board to help oversee the hospital finances, especially since the hospital's Harvard-educated treasurer, Phil Torio, has resigned.

As of end-2001, the Asian Hospital owed local banks and the International Finance Corp. P1.3 billion.

To ensure its survival, the year-old hospital needs to drastically improve its occupancy rate, which according to the grapevine is hovering between 20 and 30 percent. The hospital has so far built only 250 beds, out of the 500-bed capacity factored in its original project viability study.

Fil Estate: John Hay talks ongoing

FIL-ESTATE chair Robert John Sobrepeña has expressed surprise at the reported decision of the Bases Conver-

COCKTALES/ B7

3 countries …

From page B1

tariff cuts on its automotive industry for up to five years. Roxas said the Philippines did not seek compensation from Malaysia because the country was not a major vehicle exporter like Thailand which had demanded for trade concessions.

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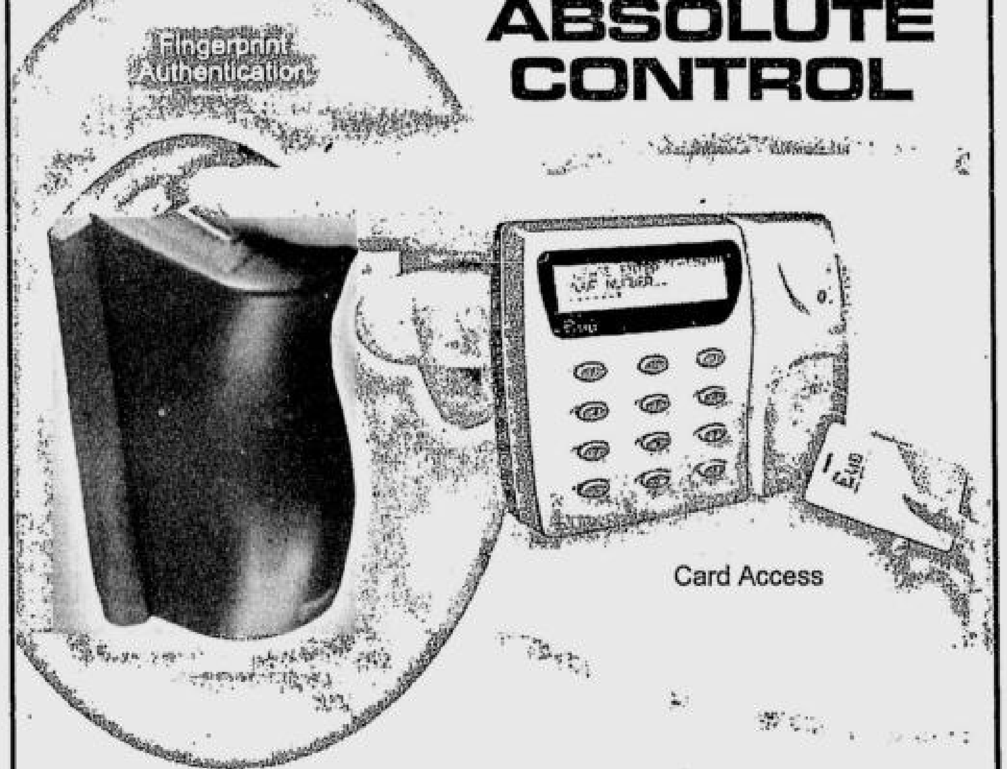

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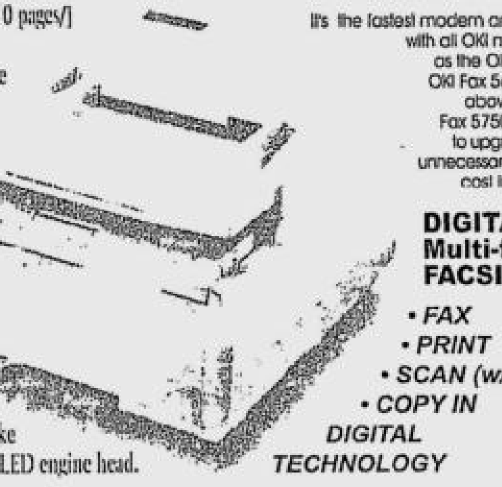

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BCDA, Fil-Estate seen going back to negotiating table

BASES Conversion Development Authority president and CEO Rufo Colayco confirmed that the BCDA board had decided to terminate its Camp John Hay lease deal with the Fil-Estate Group but clarified that the group, through Camp John Hay Development Corp., would have 30 to 90 days to contest the decision or settle with the BCDA.

Colayco said the BCDA was still finalizing the lease termination notice to be served to CJHDevCo and the 30- to 90-day period given to the company to contest or settle would start upon receipt of the notice.

In the meantime, CJHDC, in a statement, claimed that the BCDA had deferred its decision on the settlement proposal of CJHDevCo for its unpaid lease rentals in the Camp John Hay project.

Lawyer Gina Alvarez, CJHDevCo chief counsel, said that the BCDA had agreed to enter into negotiations with CJHDevCo. For the past two years, BCDA and CJHDevCo have been negotiating in good faith, she said.

At the moment, Alvarez said the issues relating to the settlement proposal had been narrowed down to the terms of valuation and interest computation.

"Communications between us are ongoing. As far as we know, the restructuring proposal is still in the works and only minor details need to be ironed out. Both parties expect an early resolution."

Colayco, however, said the BCDA board had made the decision to terminate the deal because talks with CJHDevCo were not progressing as desired.

A source said the BCDA was hoping the decision to terminate would prompt the Fil-Estate group to make progress in the negotiations. However, if talks would still fail, the source said the BCDA was ready to take over and re-bid the 247-hectare complex in Baguio City.

"The government has no intention to take over the place and run it. We still adhere to the gov-

BCDA/B8

English: Insurance language worldwide

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

DO you know that the Philippines is the third largest English-speaking country in the world, next only to the United States and the United Kingdom? Don't take my word for it. Ask the United Nations.

But we have been slipping. For some years now, teaching English in public schools has slowed down. As a result, we are turning out college graduates who cannot write a simple English sentence. On the other hand, countries around us are frantically trying to catch up. Pilipino teachers are going to China to join a million others to teach English.

I am glad that President Macapagal-Arroyo has decided to reverse the slide by directing that English be used once again as the medium of instruction in public schools. Then perhaps we can regain the old glory days of Camilo Osias and Claro Recto.

The directive is most particularly welcome in the insurance industry.

English is the language of insurance worldwide. In the Philippines, insurance policies are all in English. Some retain even the original wordings of many years ago. The fire insurance policy still carries the old California clauses copied in the 1920s. The motor car policy used to be British, now it is American. The engineering policies, invented by the Germans, are all written here in English. There has been a proliferation of life insurance policies over the past few years, but the basic provisions of old are preserved.

But the grandfather of all policies is the marine insurance policy. The first policies were written in London over 300 hundred years ago. The quaint language is still in use. Listen to this opening clause:

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How can anyone be an insurance practitioner wading through the intricacies of marine insurance as exemplified by the above clause, and appreciate the legal interpretation of every word, if he does not have a good command of the King's English?

The insurance code, taken up as a minor

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES/B7

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What : The EU GSP is a system whereby the European Union grants duty-free status or a reduced duty on imports from developing countries like the Philippines in order to promote industrialization, regional integration and sustainable development in beneficiary countries. The general EU GSP arrangements now provide the most generous tariff preferences ever made available under the EU GSP. Basically, duty-free access is given for all non-sensitive products and a flat rate reduction of 3.5 percentage points on the duty rates of most other products are granted under the scheme. Be familiar and benefit from the tariff preferences offered by the new EU GSP.

Note: The seminar only covers matters related to GSP. It does NOT intend to assist exporters in finding clients, representatives/agents, solving logistics problems, or getting information on import regulations (e.g. phyto-sanitary), etc.

When and Where : 17 Feb. 2003 (8:30am-5pm) – 18 Feb. 2003 (8:30am-12noon), Quezon Room, Makati Shangri-la Hotel, Makati City

Who Should Attend : Exporters, industry associations, chambers of commerce and relevant government agencies. *(Please note that participation is limited to 100 persons and will be distributed among target groups.)*

Resource Speakers : **Mr. Ivano Casella** – GSP Desk Officer in the EC Directorate General for Trade

Mr. Hannu Pitkanen – GSP Official in the EC Directorate General for Trade

How to Register : Registration is **FREE** but pre-registration is necessary and will be on a first-come first-served basis as well as subject to the final confirmation of ECCP. Deadline for pre-registration is **February 12**. Snacks/lunch, seminar materials and a certificate of attendance will be provided. For more information or to register for your FREE participation in the seminar, contact the Secretariat:

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The Country Bankers Insurance Group through its President Ernesto D. Villareal, Jr. received from the Office of the Insurance Commissioner a **recall order** dated February 5, 2003 revoking the appointment dated January 31, 2003 of **Atty. Ignacio Macrohon.**

The Country Bankers Insurance Group through its President Ernesto D. Villareal, Jr. **RECOGNIZES with gratitude** the formal manifestation of support of the Rural Banks and general agents, the lifeblood of the insurance group's core business.

The Country Bankers Insurance Group through its President Ernesto D. Villareal, Jr. **RECOGNIZES** the authority of the Courts in keeping things as they were in a controversy by restraining one party from doing damage to a contending party **(as in the restraining order issued by the Court dated February 5, 2003)**. But more importantly, the Court seeks to preserve the institution and consequently to benefit the publics the institution serves.

COUNTRY BANKERS INSURANCE GROUP

Probe on CR-V tax perks set

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE SENATE has set an investigation into reports that the Bureau of Internal Revenue has been abusing its power to categorize tax subjects under the 1997 Tax Reform Code.

The Senate has ordered the BIR to submit a report on the tax subjects it has reclassified since 1997 to check for possible leakage that may have contributed to the national government's P212-billion budget deficit last year, including the reclassification of the Honda CR-V from a sport-utility vehicle to a tax-free Asian-utility vehicle.

Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. alleged earlier that the government lost about P1.5 billion in tax revenues because of the CR-V's reclassification.

Magsaysay filed a resolution on Friday seeking a probe into the BIR's powers in reaction to criticisms over BIR Revenue Regulation 4-2003, which tightened the so-called 10-seater tax rule.

Magsaysay said the BIR might have "exercised an overbreadth interpretation of its functions" when it issued RR 4-2003 in the middle of ongoing congressional hearings on the government's draft bill amending the vehicle tax system.

He said RR 4-2003 pre-empted the lawmakers' tax-making duties.

"The power of taxation rests on the Philippine Congress, as it is essentially a legislative function that, even in the absence of any constitutional provision, falls to the legislature as part of the more general power of lawmaking," Magsaysay stressed.

Tax take ahead by ₱3B

THE GOVERNMENT has said its revenues will likely surpass its target by at least P3 billion despite a possible P2-billion shortfall in the Bureau of Internal Revenue's collections.

Using last week's numbers, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said the BIR collected about P35 billion. The internal revenue agency must collect P37 billion in January.

The Bureau of Customs said it collected P9.6 billion against a target of P7.5 billion, while the Bureau of Treasury said it delivered P4.5 billion against a target of P1.5 billion. *Clarissa S. Batino*

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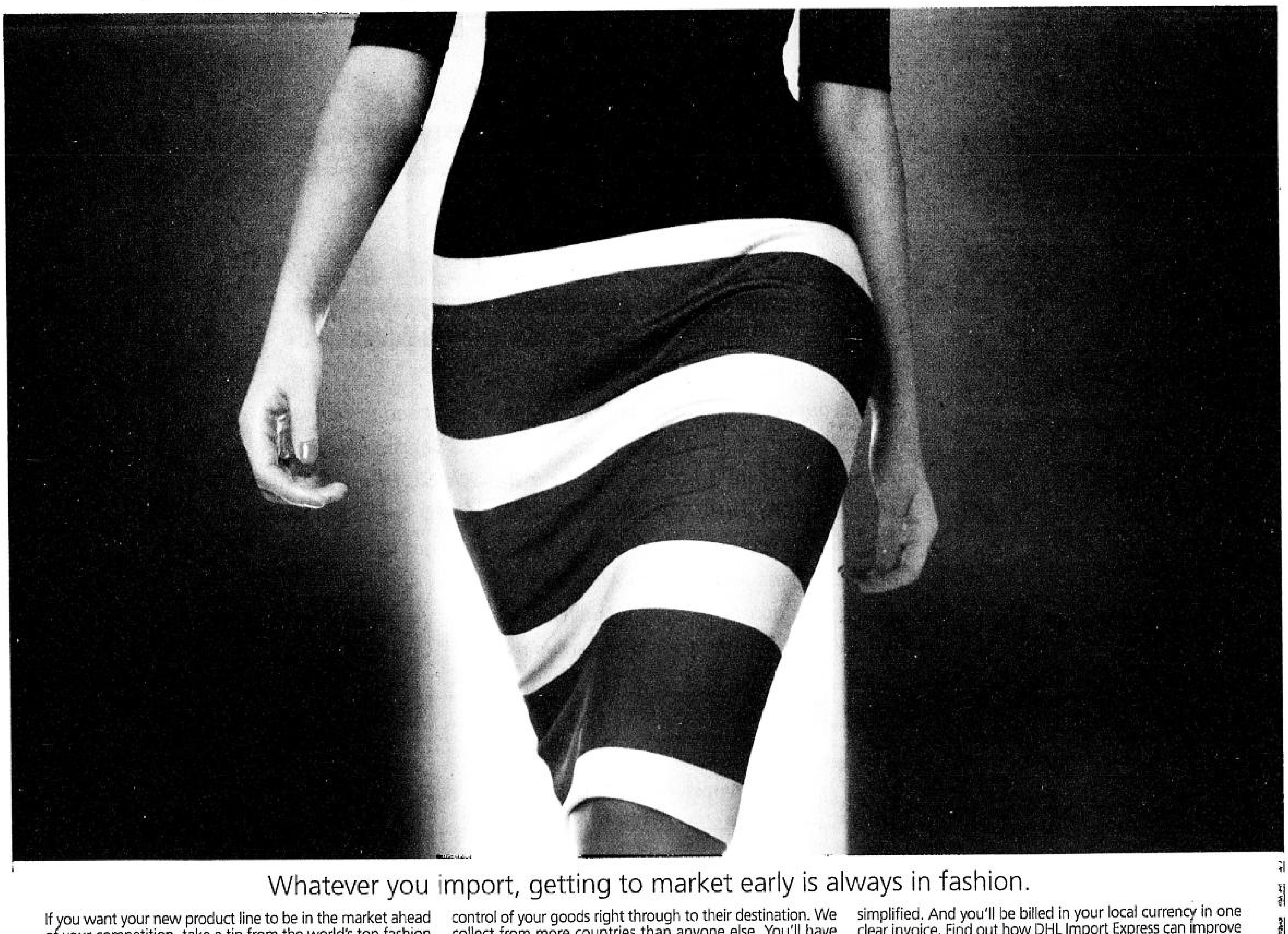

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THE PULSE OF BUSINESS

RP to include services in future bilateral trade talks

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE PHILIPPINES will insist on adding services on the agenda of all its bilateral trade negotiations to spur the deployment of Filipino nurses, teachers, accountants and other professionals in tandem with the increase in exports of the country's mangoes and bananas.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II said that the Philippines could agree to trade concessions with its trade partners in exchange for relaxing the limits on the hiring of Filipino service providers in their country.

"We have included services as part of the quid pro quo discussions because we want our professionals to have an easier time moving from country to country," Roxas said.

Roxas said the Philippines has decided to advocate the liberalization of the services sector on a bilateral rather than a multilateral level because of stiff resistance to the reform in the World Trade Organization.

Roxas said the country had a better chance of asking Japan or the United States to ease up on their limits on hiring migrant workers rather than wait for the WTO members to implement their commitment to liberalize the services sector.

The Philippines is currently holding discussions with Japan as part of a proposal to form a Japan-Asean free trade agreement and among the country's demands is for Filipino nurses, caregivers and information technology professionals to have greater access to employment in Japan.

The STI Education Services Group led by former AIM president Felipe B. Alfonso and businessman Eusebio Tanco had earlier called on the government to step up lobbying efforts to force developed countries fulfill their commitments to open up their services sector.

STI had broadened its IT-based curriculum to include healthcare, engineering and accounting in response to rising global demand for workers in these fields.

But while the government was looking for ways to help Filipinos land more jobs abroad, Roxas said it was equally concerned on the brain drain in the country particularly the "hollowing out" of the ranks of Filipino teachers.

He said the US, China, Korea and Vietnam have been recruiting Filipino teachers to teach in their home country at a rate that could have an impact on the quality of the country's education system and service professionals in the future.

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BSP to keep key policy rates unchanged despite peso fall

By Clarissa S. Batino

TETANGCO

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas said it would not use monetary tools to stabilize the peso unless the currency movement was already putting serious pressure on consumer prices.

This means the Monetary Board will not raise the BSP's overnight rates or the reserve requirement on banks to ease the pressure on the peso, according to BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr.

Tetangco made the statement to allay market fears that monetary authorities might start jacking up interest rates and reserve requirements to prop up the peso after it fell to 54.10 to $1 early Friday. The peso recovered later in the day to close at 53.93 to $1, which was even better than Thursday's close of P53.98 to $1.

"The pressure on the local currency is not unique to the Philippines. Other countries are also experiencing pressure on their currencies because of the Middle East conflict. When this problem is over, the exchange rate will settle down," said the BSP deputy governor.

The key policy rates remain at their decade lows of 7 percent for overnight borrowing and 9.25 percent for overnight lending while the banks' mandatory deposit level to the BSP or the reserve requirement is unchanged at 16 percent.

"Banks get scared of their own shadow. They must remember that we are using inflation targeting which means policy will remain unchanged for as long as the inflation outlook is consistent with the target. We have no plans at this point to move any of the policies like overnight rates, tiering, and reserve requirement," said Tetangco.

The BSP shifted to inflation targeting in January last year. This practice essentially means that it will base its monetary decisions on inflation trend and outlook and no longer on exchange rate movements as it used to do.

Under inflation targeting, the central bank is committed to keep consumer prices stable using its monetary tools.

The BSP must ensure that inflation is within the target of 4.5 percent to 5.5 percent this year and 4 percent to 5 percent in 2004 as approved by the Development Budget Coordination Committee.

"At the same time, we must remember that ours is an open economy which means depreciation in the currency has an impact on inflation. For as long as that impact on inflation is not affecting the target and the outlook, then there will be no movement in monetary policies," assured Tetangco.

"We are monitoring the exchange rate movements and we are enforcing our regulatory powers to take out some of the potential pressures like hoarding," said Tetangco.

The central bank reminded active exchange rate players that regulations to curb hoarding and speculation were still in effect.

Roving teams of examiners have been reactivated since Friday to inspect the books of active exchange rate traders and ensure that they comply with the BSP regulations.

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Cocktales

From page B3

sion and Development Authority to terminate the lease agreement of the Fil-Estate-led consortium now developing Baguio's Camp John Hay. (*Cocktales, 7 Feb. 2003*)

Sobrepeña, who left for overseas during the weekend, is arranging a meeting with the BCDA board immediately upon his return to get a clearer reading of the situation.

According to the Camp John Hay consortium, talks with BCDA, which have been going nowhere for two years, are still ongoing in "good faith."

Only the issues of valuation and interest computation are what set the government and the consortium apart, according to Sobrepeña.

Except for the first year lease in 1997, the consortium, formally known as CJH Development Corp., has stumbled in its yearly lease payments for the use and development of the former US military facility.

Sobrepeña blames the lingering effects of the currency crisis, the volatile Erap years and the delay in BCDA turnover of certain portions of John Hay for the stalled development and payment arrears.

According to the grapevine, even the Baguio City government, which is entitled to a percentage of the real estate tax, is now pressing BCDA to collect on the P1.15 billion in back lease payments CJH Development Corp. has accumulated as of end-2002.

In defense, Sobrepeña said their consortium has already pumped in about P2.2 billion to turn the camp into a world-class resort.

The consortium has also committed to put in another P1.76 billion worth of improvements in the 247-hectare complex by yearend.

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The offer is good up to March 15 departure, with return no later than April 15.

The business class fare has likewise been slashed to $900 + 30,000 miles.

Promo fares to Japan have also been reduced to $199 +10,000 miles for economy, and $450 +15,000 miles for business.

The fine print, as usual, is that seats to this promo are limited.

Heard through the grapevine

THE ACCRA law firm has asked Sen. Edgardo Angara to rejoin the firm (did he ever leave?) as a senior name partner.

Victor Lazatin has decided to take it easy after managing the Marcos and Erap-favorite firm for 10 years, with Eusebio Tan now being elected to succeed Lazatin as managing partner.

Francis Lim was likewise elected co-managing partner while litigation expert Rogelio Vinluan was appointed Of Counsel.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

Questions of Policies

From page B4

subject in law schools, is entirely in English. Originally copied in the 1920s from the Californian code, the local code now has provisions spliced from the New York law. All local jurisprudence has been in English. Landmark cases in the United States bear heavily on local cases. Sometime ago, a bill was filed in the House requiring insurance policies to be written in Pilipino. Of course, the bill was written in English. Mercifully, the bill died in sub-committee.

Insurance is probably the most international of all businesses. An executive in Manila can call a friend in London, Munich, Zurich and New York for reinsurance support and the deal can be closed over the phone.

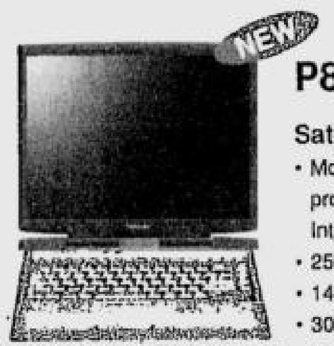
The transactions are negotiated in English. A local company may have reinsurance connections with Japan, Germany, France and South Korea, but all the contracts are in English.

Insurance education is all in English. The insurance institutes offer courses only in English. The reference materials in libraries maintained by the institutes, the Insurance Commission, and some of the large insurance companies are all in English.

Even the profile of the insurance agent has dramatically changed. When I joined the FGU Insurance Group 50 years ago, the top agent was Eufronio de Leon, a real pioneer, and my idol. As a young man without a high school diploma, he came out of Batangas in 1937 looking for work in Manila. At Plaza Moraga, he saw a sign, "agents wanted." He walked in and was accepted. He was given the barest of instructions, handed a rate book and a bunch of proposal forms. He was a great success.

Today, he would not stand a chance against the new breed of professional agents who are well educated, highly trained and closely supervised—in English.

In spite of the outcry of the nationalists and the Tagalog imperialists, the renewed emphasis on English on the public schools will do wonders to the country.



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Baguio Country Club	600,000	650,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	-	70,000
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	-	80,000
Camp John Hay	220,000	240,000
Canlubang	-	450,000
Canyonwoods	-	180,000
Capitol Hills	90,000	110,000
Celebrity Sports Club	140,000	185,000
Club Filipino	-	150,000
Evercrest "A"		80,000
Forest Hills "A"		200,000
Forest Hills "B"		250,000
Forest Hills "C"	-	250,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	220,000	240,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	11,000,000	12,800,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	10,500,000	11,700,000
Manila Polo	2,400,000	2,550,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	500,000	550,000
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Metropolitan Club "A"	90,000	130,000
Metropolitan Club "B"	100,000	130,000
Mimosa (Individual)	100,000	135,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	250,000	325,000
Montemar (Individual)	20,000	35,000
Mt. Malarayat (Individual)	-	300,000
Mt. Malarayat (Corporate)		450,000
Puerto Azul		100,000
Punta Fuego	-	540,000
Quezon City Sports Club	200,000	220,000
Rockwell	Please Call	430,000
Royale Tagaytay "A"	-	Please Call
Sherwood Hills "A"		90,000
Sherwood Hills "B"		180,000
Sherwood Hills "C"		200,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,300,000	1,550,000
Sta. Elena "B"		1,050,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)		280,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	-	170,000
Tagaytay Country Club	320,000	350,000
Tagaytay Highlands	800,000	850,000
Tagaytay Midlands	700,000	780,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	130,000	160,000
Valley Golf	260,000	275,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	6,000,000	6,400,000

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China is the yuan booming economy

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

I LIKE to be topical, so today the jokes will be all about love and marriage, in deference to Valentine's Day on Friday. Also, as we now enter the Chinese New Year, I will look at China's economy. Feb. 14 is not only Valentine's Day but also my wedding anniversary, and I am wearing a black armband. I decided it was a good day to get married because I only had to take my wife out once a year instead of twice. Also, all the expensive restaurants are booked up well in advance, so we always end up in The Greasy Spoon, all you can eat for P20. You have to have financial acumen to be a financial columnist.

What did the bride say when she walked arm in arm in the church with her fiancé? AISLE, ALTAR, HYMN.

I well remember our wedding. My father told all the guests that we had gone up to the bedroom to put our things together. He meant the wedding presents, but it caused howls of laughter. On our wedding night, we took our first bath together. My wife looked down at me and said, "Too big."

"No," I replied, "it's just normal for a well-endowed Englishman."

"No, stupid, *tubig* means water," Boy, did I feel deflated. Actually, in my younger days, I was the model for Smokey's foot-long sausage.

"I heard you were going out with that rich handsome guy named Juan. Then you married that poor drunken slob, Fred. What happened?"

"He was the Juan that got away."

At a cocktail party, one woman asked another, "Aren't you wearing your ring on the wrong hand?"

"Yes, I am," she replied. "I married the wrong man."

When a man inserted an advertisement in the paper, "Wife wanted," he received 100 replies, "You can have mine."

In our pre-nuptial agreement, I have to give all my shares in ALI to my wife. If we get divorced, it's called Alimoney.

There was a young man from Nepal
And Sue was the name of his gal.
Lovemaking, one day
He went in a long way,
In fact, right up Suez Canal.

* * *

There was a young knight from Parma
Who got into bed with a charmer
She, naturally nude
Said, "Don't think me rude,
But I do wish you'd take off your armor."

Last week, I wrote about the Japanese bubble, which started in 1980 and lasted 10 years, followed by 12 years of depression, which still continues. In 1990, the United States entered into 10 years of prosperity fueled by computers and the Internet, and followed by a crash, which may or may not have ended. Around 2000, China took up the reins as the economic superpower and has been outpacing the rest of the world with a steady growth rate of 8 percent. The United States is growing about 2.7 percent, the United Kingdom by 1.7 percent and Europe by between 0 and 0.4 percent.

At present, China accounts for 15 percent of world economic growth, and nearly 60 percent of world export growth. Foreign investment last year was a staggering $50 billion, but most of it came from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. Despite political differences, Taiwan has poured huge amounts of money into China, and the Chinese prefer to have their own kind as partners. It is difficult for foreigners to get a foot in the door except as a junior partner. India is worse because they discourage foreign investment altogether, and it is difficult to curry favor with them.

China's GDP is still behind the United States, Japan and a few European countries when measured in traditional terms, but when measured in terms of purchasing parity with the dollar, China's GDP ranks second in the world. One day 10 to 20 years from now, China may become the world's No. 1 economic superpower with its population of 1.3 billion. Within five years, it will be larger than the whole of Europe.

China's exports are growing at a tremendous pace. Last year, America's trade gap with China reached $100 billion. China's effect on the world economy is deflationary because of its non-stop output of cheap goods, which even threaten developing countries such as Mexico and India. Because China has deflation of 0.8 percent, prices will continue to fall and threaten other Asian countries.

As China wanted to join the World Trade Organization, it agreed not to devalue the yuan but to keep parity with the US dollar. This it has done, and it is now a full member of the WTO, but in the last six, months the US dollar has fallen about 14 percent against the euro and 16 percent against the British pound. This means that the yuan has become increasingly competitive and poses a major threat to Europe and other parts of the world. China's currency is now considered undervalued and will remain at an advantageous rate so long as the US dollar remains weak.

Although China exports massive quantities of goods each year, it imports relatively little because its consumer demand is rising from a low base. China's per capita income is $4,300 against $36,300 in the United States. This low income ranks below Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand and Malaysia, yet the Chinese government maintains that only 10 percent of the population live below the poverty level. What that level is, I do not know.

When Japan expanded, the banks incurred huge non-performing loans, which remain to this day, and prevent Japan from breaking out of its recession. China is heading in the same direction, and must be careful not to fall into the same trap, otherwise they will eventually suffer the same fate. But they have two advantages. First, they have a huge pool of cheap labor and, secondly, they will not hesitate to lay off people if the bubble bursts. Also, they can learn from their predecessor's mistakes. For the time being, China looks to be the world's most vibrant economy and the bubble is not likely to burst any time soon. But for China's competitors, that is something to worry about.

We have no rain this time of year but I have opened the window so as to listen to the falling peso.

Comments to mrbearbull@hotmail.com

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Friday, February 7, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17	17	16.75	16.75	84,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	35	35	34.5	35	84,900
China Banking Corp.	635	635	635	635	400
Citystate Savings Bank	14.75	14.75	14.75	14.75	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	26	26	25.5	25.5	10,800
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	30.5	30.5	30	30	23,900
Philippine National Bank	27	27.5	27	27.5	3,300
Phil. Savings Bank	26.5	27	26.5	27	200
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	110,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1265	1265	1265	1265	70
Sun Life Financial Serv.	955	955	950	955	1,650
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	540,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	525	555	525	550	12,370
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.026	0.027	0.026	0.027	2,300,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	10,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	120,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	280	287.5	277.5	285	240,800
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	12,100,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.6	35,000
Manila Electric Co. B	12.25	12.25	12	12	495,700
Petron Corp.	1.66	1.68	1.66	1.68	95,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	28,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.4	2.42	2.4	2.42	940,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	10,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.2	39,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Jollibee Foods Corp.	17	17.25	17	17	349,000
San Miguel Corp. A	55.5	56	55.5	56	107,800
San Miguel Corp. B	62	62	61	61.5	438,100
Universal Robina Corp.	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	14,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.25	4.3	4.25	4.3	1,076,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.34	2.34	2.32	2.32	1,493,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	30,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	2,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.15	0.15	200,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.9	2.1	1.9	2	20,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	90,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.14	0.145	0.135	0.145	2,180,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	100,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	20,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	8.8	8.8	8.6	8.7	85,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.58	0.59	0.58	0.59	1,000,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.155	0.155	310,000
Music Corp.	0.115	0.125	0.115	0.125	2,780,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.032	0.032	0.032	0.032	100,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	560,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	20,000
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1.92	1.92	1.92	1.92	200,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	10,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.67	0.68	0.67	0.68	670,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	12.75	12.75	12.25	12.25	117,700
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.3	230,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	20,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	643,000
Jollibee Warrants	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	50,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10	10	10	10	1,000
OTHERS					
Far Eastern University	470	470	470	470	350
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5	5	4.95	5	6,248,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	290,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	150,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.99	0.99	0.97	0.99	4,700,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	1.94	1.94	1.94	1.94	100,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	500,000
SM Development Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	50,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.3	5.4	5.3	5.3	1,185,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	3,000,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	40,000
Omico Corp.	0.0022	0.0022	0.0022	0.0022	2,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	380,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	1,300,000
OIL					
Interport Res. B	0.0016	0.0016	0.0016	0.0016	10,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	7,000,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	60,000

CURRENCIES

Feb. 7, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
Feb. 7, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	0.923361	1.000000	53.963000
Japan	Yen	0.007707	0.008347	0.450400
United Kingdom	Pound	1.512558	1.638100	88.396800
Hongkong	Dollar	0.118391	0.128217	6.919000
Switzerland	Franc	0.681950	0.738552	39.854500
Canada	Dollar	0.608917	0.659457	35.586300
Singapore	Dollar	0.530850	0.574911	31.023900
Australia	Dollar	0.545141	0.590388	31.859100
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.449364	2.652661	143.145500
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.246223	0.266660	14.389800
Brunei	Dollar	0.529329	0.573263	30.935000
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000104	0.000113	0.006100
Thailand	Baht	0.021589	0.023381	1.261700
UAE	Dirham	0.251426	0.272294	14.693800
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.083000	58.441900
Argentina	Peso	0.294064	0.318471	17.185700
Brazil	Real	0.256703	0.278009	15.002200
Denmark	Kroner	0.134906	0.146103	7.884200
India	Rupee	0.019357	0.020964	1.131300
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.243022	0.263193	14.202700
Mexico	New Peso	0.084766	0.091802	4.953900
New Zealand	Dollar	0.506174	0.548186	29.581800
Norway	Kroner	0.133440	0.144515	7.798500
Pakistan	Rupee	0.015909	0.017229	0.929700
South Africa	Rand	0.111233	0.120465	6.500700
Korea	Won	0.000789	0.000855	0.046100
Sweden	Kroner	0.108925	0.117966	6.365800
Syria	Pound	0.017929	0.019417	1.047800
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026609	0.028818	1.555100
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000481	0.000521	0.028100

Listless trade seen on war, peso fall

By Doris C. Dumlao

MARKET PLAY

ANOTHER week of listless trading awaits local stocks in view of the increasing likelihood that war will break out in the Middle East over Iraq and the peso's continuing weakness against the US dollar.

The local currency breached the 54-per-dollar level on Friday.

Foreign exchange traders believe that once war breaks out between the United States and Iraq, the peso may slide beyond its all-time low of 55.75 to a dollar.

Last week, the Philippine Stock Exchange composite index fell 1.41 percent week-on-week to close at 1,041.83 points.

AB Capital Securities Corp. analyst Jose Vistan said concerns over the United States' war preparations to invade Iraq would continue to force investors to stay on the sidelines.

The immediate support for the Phisix is at 1,030 and its resistance will be at 1,050, Vistan said.

"Share prices are likely to trade in a narrow range until the uncertainty surrounding the Iraq issue is resolved," he said.

Historically, stocks tend to trade with caution in the weeks leading up to any war, Vistan said. Volatility usually sets in when the war begins, he said.

"The first shots could spark a sharp rally in the stock market, the same thing that happened after the first day of Operation Desert Storm, when the Phisix shot up 5.85 percent on Jan. 18, 1991. Historically, wars have been good for stocks," Vistan said.

In conventional wars involving the United States dating back to 1914, the Dow Jones industrial average-benchmark of US stocks-had been rising by an average 15 percent per annum, Vistan said.

"Still, questions will remain about the aftermath. Will the US win? Is the war going to be short? Will there be retaliations through increased terrorist activities?" he said.

"There will be worries also of the after effects of a war. A war with Iraq would affect us in the form of higher oil prices and declining investments and exports," he added.

"Companies will delay investment decisions, which will stifle a rebound in the economy and corporate profits. We remain cautious over the short term. But investors should slowly build up a long position on the assumption of an improving Philippine economy and a quick, successful war in Iraq," he said.

BPI Securities Corp., in its weekly outlook, agreed that investors were staying liquid ahead of a possible US-led war against Iraq.

"The longer this issue is unresolved, the more investors are likely to stay sidelined. However, investors may be accumulating on selected issues depending on industry and corporate specific developments," BPI Securities said.

"There may be strong interest in telecommunication stocks given that Globe Telecom Inc. achieved better-than-expected 2002 earnings. Also, stronger collections by the Bureau of Customs for this month may be a prelude to better management of the budget deficit for the year," it said.

SEC discloses list of erring stockbrokers

By Michelle V. Remo

SIXTY-SIX brokers in 2000 and 77 brokers in 2002 violated the Securities Regulation Code, committing various acts to manipulate market prices, the Securities and Exchange Commission has reported.

The SEC disclosed that it had about P21.3 million in collected penalties and receivables from the erring stockbrokers and individual investors.

Out of this amount, receivables amounted to around P490,000 from AT De Castro Securities Corp., PCCI Securities Brokers Corp. and Solar Securities Corp.

The SEC collected about P20.78 million worth of penalties from 2000 to 2002 from brokers found to have violated the Securities Regulation Code.

Last year, the commission fined AT De Castro for engaging in wash sales, matched orders, advanced bids, sales without order tickets and order tickets not following the prescribed format.

Other brokers found to have committed the same or other violations were Abacus Securities Corp., All Asia Securities Management Corp., First Orient Securities Inc., Guoco Securities Philippines Inc., Highland Securities Philippines Inc. and Guild Securities Inc..

Also, there were 74 individuals penalized in 2002 for violating the Securities Regulation Code. The Securities Regulation Code requires brokers and sales persons for brokers, in the conduct of doing their business, to "observe high standards of commercial honor and just and equitable principles of trade."

UOB chair airs side on deal

SINGAPORE—The head of United Overseas Bank Ltd. of Singapore has said in a deposition that his bank is "caught in the middle of a dispute between the former minority shareholders Farmix Fertilizer group and the Espiritu group."

UOB chair Wee Cho Yaw said he approved the "basic terms" of a settlement between UOB and the Espiritu group and left the details and documentation of the settlement to his management team.

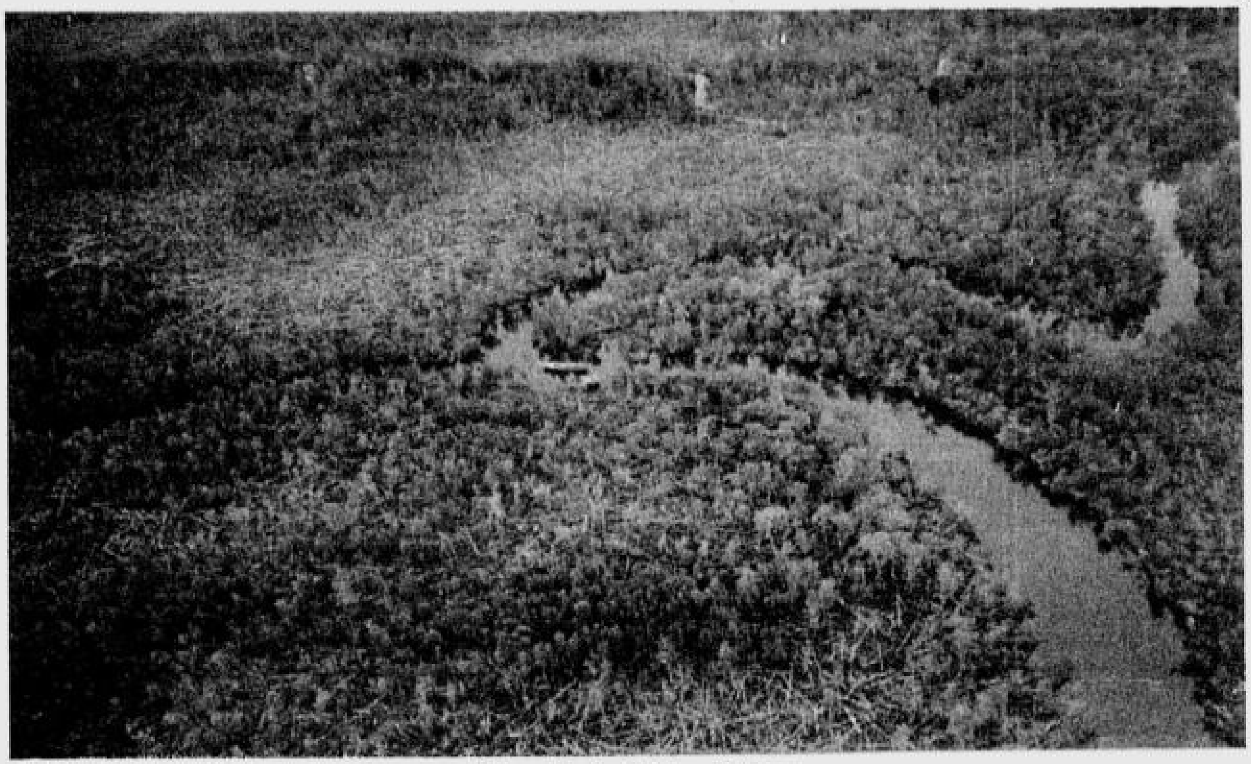
BCDA, Fil-Estate seen going back to negotiating table

From page B4

ernment's privatization policy but in a manner beneficial to the government."

The source said CJHDevCo owes more than P1 billion in back rentals. "When the BCDA issued the ultimatum to the Fil-Estate group in early 2002, the back rentals were only P721.45 million and the amount has since ballooned to more than P1 billion," the source said.

CJH DevCo operates the 189-unit Camp John Hay Manor, a golf clubhouse, a 3,000-seater convention center, various "loghomes," "countryhomes" and commercial establishments. CJHDevCo recently launched the construction of the Manor's 287-unit companion hotel called the Camp John Hay Suites. *With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Doris C. Dumlao*



AN AERIAL view of the extent of mangrove destruction in Balabac, Palawan.

Shrimp farming causing global ecological crisis

By Dominique Monera-Tabora and Jofelle Tesorio
Southern Luzon Bureau

(First of two parts)

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Hold that shrimp tempura for a moment. The crispy fried shrimp deliciously wrapped in buttered flour could have been raised in fishponds that are causing more ecological damage than you are aware of.

This was the message that Isabel de la Torre, international coordinator of the Industrial Shrimp Action Network, told reporters during the "Ecological Economics Skillshare," an international conference on the "Impact of Shrimp Aquaculture on Mangroves and Local Communities" held here on Jan. 4 to 12.

SPECIAL REPORT

The conference was jointly sponsored by ISA Net and the Asia-Pacific Environmental Exchange Center.

The participants met to seek solutions to problems affecting the mangrove ecosystem, shrimp farming and dealing with local communities.

As a result of the mangrove valuation done by professors of the University of Vermont Center for Ecological Economics, marine biologists and environmental activists from 10 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, the participants are now advocating the removal of shrimp aquaculture from the Investment Priorities Plan of the government.

They said the conversion of vast tracts of tropical mangrove forests and coastal lands into aquaculture ponds for the development of shrimp aquaculture was killing the whole fishing industry.

Shrimp trade

De la Torre added that many non-government organizations and academicians in Asia were waiting for the results of the conference that would be developed as a working paper in their fight to protect the mangroves.

A report written by De la Torre and David Batker, director of the Asia-Pacific Environmental Exchange Center, said shrimp trade was driven by consumption.

Consumers in the United States alone ate about a billion pounds of shrimp in 1998. The United States spent $3.1 billion importing 695,000 pounds of shrimp that same year.

This consumption drives a massive worldwide trade in shrimp, with over 50 countries supplying the United States with shrimps.

Due to its popularity in the United States, Europe and Asia and the absence of trade barriers, "shrimp is by far the highest value aquaculture product traded today," according to the Food and Agriculture Organization in 1998.

"During the 1970s and 1980s, the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and foreign aid programs provided massive loans and grants for the development of shrimp aquaculture throughout the tropics.

Studies funded by these entities amply demonstrated the high short-term returns of shrimp aquaculture, as well as its success in earning producers a great deal of foreign currency. Unfortunately, the environmental, social and long-term economic impacts of shrimp aquaculture were overlooked," according to the report, which discussed the social and environmental impacts of the production, trade and consumption of farmed shrimps.

Mangrove forests lost

The report also revealed that "half of the world's tropical mangrove forest has been lost and about half of that was lost in the past 20 years. The shrimp farming industry, having ballooned for the past 15 years, has been one of the major causes of such loss. By clearing mangroves which protect coral reefs and provide nurseries for most tropical commercial fish species, shrimp farming destroys habitat for endangered and other species, silts coral reefs, reduces coastal marine fisheries and eliminates the livelihood of coastal fisher folk."

It added: "Shrimp aquaculture has high impoverishing effects on coastal people."

The effects are shown in the decline in coastal fisheries production, increase in storm damage, saltwater intrusion, diminishing mangrove forest products and displacement of coastal people.

"In addition, shrimp farming is highly pollutant. It is dumping tremendous amounts of wastes into estuaries and coastal waters. It is also dependent on massive amounts of antibiotics, pesticides, fungicides, fishkilling chemicals, fertilizers and commercial feeds. In the end, shrimp aquaculture is not sustainable. Diseases invade the ponds, the industry closes, then move down the coast to a pristine new area to denude and pollute. In a dozen countries, thousands of acres of shrimp ponds have been abandoned. Polluted, these lands cannot easily be reclaimed to agriculture or mangrove forests. Local people bear the long-term costs," the paper concluded," the study said.

Another study by the Foodfirst Institute for Food and Development Policy found that "industrial shrimp farming has caused social dislocation, ecological change and environmental destruction."

The Industrial Shrimp Action Network was found "to show that it is the rich growing appetite of rich US, Japan and Western European countries that lead to the environmental and social havoc caused by farming shrimp."

Batker, director of the Asia-Pacific Environmental Exchange Center, added that shrimp farming actually reduced food security for the poor while local fishers lost their jobs and concentrated wealth in the hands of a few pond owners, skewing wealth distribution in the process.

Ecological crisis

In his presentation, Batker said since "ecological crises are driven by economic decisions, the only justification for an environmentally destructive action is an economic justification."

The participants are optimistic that that their findings can influence policies towards environment-friendly industries.

Using the five major ecosystem services that mangrove forests provide as against the direct benefit from shrimp farms, participants of the Ecological Economics Skillshare found that a hectare of mangroves without shrimp farms would earn $5,000 to $41,000 every year forever. One hectare of mangroves converted to shrimp farm would earn $13,000 to $30,000 for three years only. The total economic, ecological and social value for every one hectare of mangrove forest would be $5,000 to $41,000 a year. However, converting one hectare of mangrove forest into fishpond for shrimp farming would amount to a loss of $64,000 to $4.1 million per year. (To be continued)

Agriculture officials see further increase in rice production in 2003

THE GOVERNMENT is optimistic that the country "can slow down rice importation in the near future" following the growing domestic propagation of hybrid rice leading to a possible review of prevailing rice pricing policy, Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr. has said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has directed the agriculture department to speed up the propagation of the rice variety developed by PhilRice and backed last year by a government budget of approximately P450 million.

The agriculture department has set a target of 200,000 hectares for the planting of the high-yielding rice variety by the end of the dry season of 2004. A total of 125,000 ha for both dry and wet season planting this year have been set.

Lorenzo said the total target area corresponded to a projected output increment of some 500,000 metric tons of palay, or 325,000 metric tons of rice.

The country currently requires some 20.931 million metric tons of rice to feed an estimated population of 76.4 million. The average palay production of 12.9 metric tons, however, falls short of the requirement.

The government, through the National Food Authority, imports an average of 375,000 metric tons from these countries.

Recently, the agriculture department, through PhilRice, further stepped up the propagation of hybrid rice by tapping the farming resources of the Bureau of Corrections.

Allied Bank, 3 co-defendants ordered to pay ₱8M in damages

THE QUEZON City Regional Trial Court has ordered Allied Banking Corp., a bank manager and two other businessmen to pay a shipping line business executive and his spouse P8 million in connection with a suit for cancellation of mortgage and damages the couple filed in 1998.

At the same time, Judge Marlene Gonzales-Sison ordered Allied Bank and its branch manager, Padita Uy, to return two transfer certificate of titles to plaintiffs David Ejerjose and his spouse, Zenaida.

In the event of the defendants' failure to comply, the court also ordered the Registry of Deeds of Quezon City to cancel the TCTs and to issue new titles in the name of the plaintiffs.

The other co-defendants in the civil case, docketed as Q-98-34137, were Johnnie So, a Chinese, of 20 Maximo St., Barangay Balingasa, Quezon City and her mother-in-law, Angelina Cruz, owner of Lucky Find Enterprises located at 22 Agudo St., Caloocan City.

The case stemmed from the Eserjose couple's interest in acquiring a lot for sale located next to their residence at No. 78-E Tangali St., Barangay San Jose, Quezon City consisting of 378 square meters with Title No. RT-75353(235715) in Feb. 1993.

EXPORT AND INDUSTRY BANK

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF NEW STOCK CERTIFICATES

To All Export and Industry Bank, Inc. Stockholders:

Please be advised that your Export and Industry Bank, Inc. stock certificates to replace your old Export and Industry Bank, Inc. stock certificates (if you are an original ExportBank stockholder) or Urbancorp Investments, Inc. (UII) stock certificate (if you are an original UII stockholder) or the stock certificates for common shares representing the 10% equity conversion of former UrbanBank, Inc. depositors / UII creditors, are now available for release.

You may claim your stock certificates from the offices of our appointed stock transfer agent, PROFESSIONAL STOCK TRANSFER, INC. (PSTI) at Unit 1003 10th Floor, City and Land Mega Plaza, ADB Ave. corner Garnet Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City (at the back of Robinson's Galleria), Tel Nos. 687-4053 / 687-2733.

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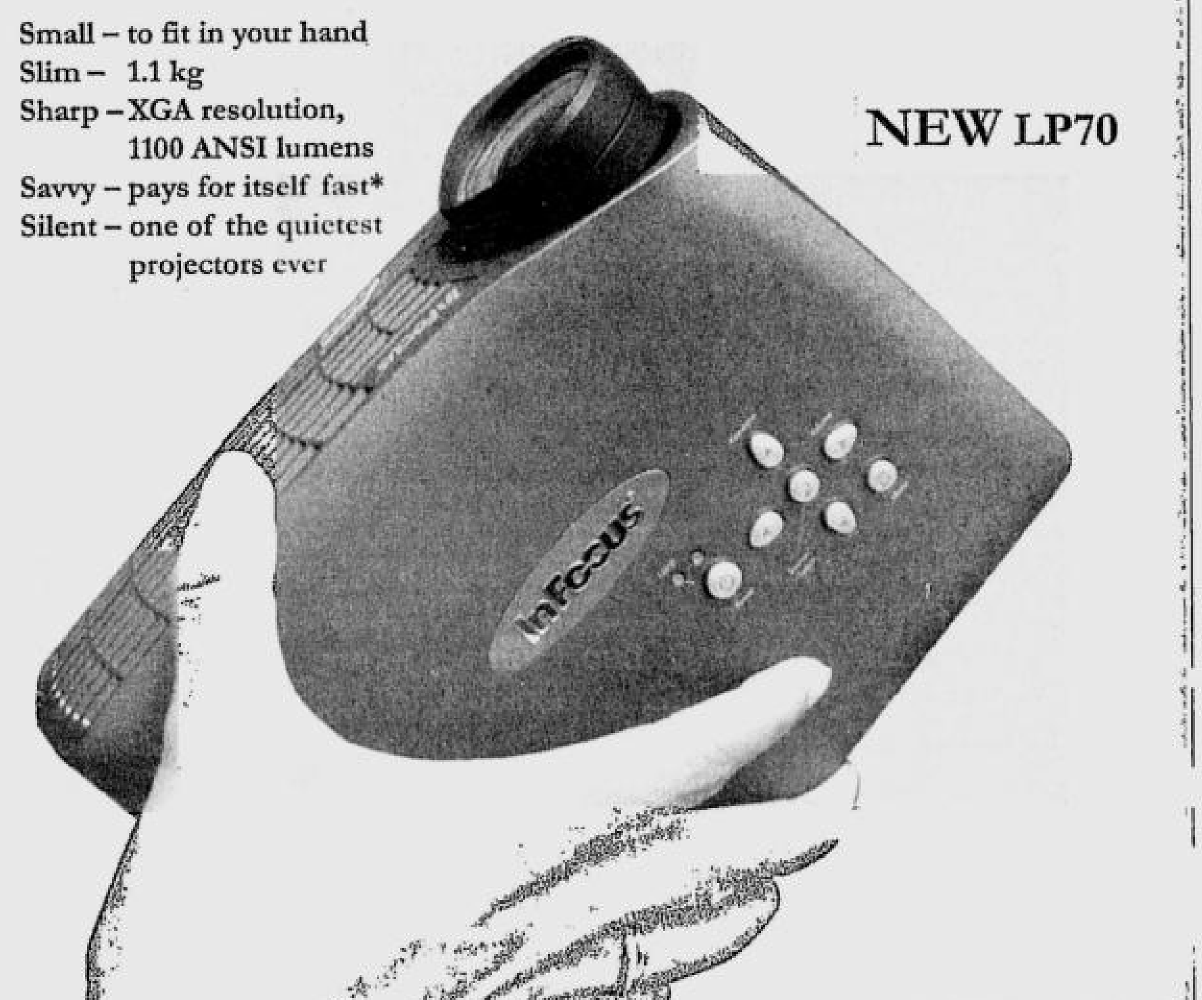

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Tariff cuts on Muslim goods urged

WASHINGTON—Former top US trade officials on Friday urged the Bush administration to add an economic component to its war on terrorism by seeking to eliminate import duties on a broad range of goods from Muslim countries.

"I think we have to think about that," former US Trade Representative Carla Hills said. "The economic well-being of the Middle Eastern countries have declined over the past 20 years and we have to address that issue."

Earlier this week, the Progressive Policy Institute, a moderate Democratic think tank, released a study that said the Bush administration's trade agenda was undermining its war on terrorism by essentially ignoring Muslim countries in the Middle East and other parts of the world.

At an event which brought together six former US trade representatives to discuss trade issues, former US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky called the Muslim Middle East the "blank spot" on the Bush administration's trade agenda.

"I would suggest any war against terrorism that doesn't envision a concrete plan for economic growth in that region will fail," Barshefsky said. *Reuters*

Bush sees economic rebound

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush's advisers presented Congress on Friday with an upbeat assessment of US economic prospects, predicting faster growth would help offset nearly half the cost of sweeping tax cuts over the next five years while reducing record deficits.

"The economy is not growing fast enough," Bush said at a ceremonial swearing-in for Treasury Secretary John Snow. "We believe the best way to deal with our deficits is to encourage economic growth and to encourage spending discipline in Washington, D.C." Bush's nearly $700-billion tax cut plan, which calls for eliminating taxes on corporate dividends paid by shareholders, has run into stiff opposition from Democrats and some moderate Republicans who say it would do little to revive the economy while pushing budget deficits to record levels.

"The president is going to fight for the plans that he submitted to the Hill," White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer told a news conference.

To that end, Fleischer said Treasury Secretary John Snow, Commerce Secretary Don Evans and White House economic adviser Stephen Friedman would meet with Republican lawmakers.

In addition, Fleischer said 15 to 20 members of Bush's Cabinet and other senior administration officials would fan out over the next two weeks to more than 20 cities to tout the package, which would accelerate income tax rate cuts scheduled for 2004 and 2006.

The 400-page "Economic Report of the President," released on Friday, makes the case for conservative, free market policies, including sweeping tax reform.

It also prods China to meet its trade obligations, warning that failure to do so could prompt other members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to retaliate.

White House officials played down the impact of Bush's tax cuts on government debt and interest rates.

Bush economic adviser Glenn Hubbard estimated that the Treasury would recoup 40 percent of the cost over the next five years through increased economic growth.

But he warned of "very prominent downside risks" to recovery, chief among them slow growth in business investment.

He played down the impact of a possible war with Iraq on business sentiment, saying it was one of several factors.

"The economy is recovering" from the recession and the Sept. 11 attacks, Bush said in a statement accompanying the report.

"Despite these challenges, the economy's underlying fundamentals remain solid—including low inflation, low interest rates, and strong productivity gains. Yet the pace of the expansion has not been satisfactory," he added.

Bush's economic report forecasts rosy days for the now-floundering economy.

After a quarter of weakness at the end of 2002, the report says the economy should "gather strength" during 2003, with real GDP growing 3.4 percent, calculated on a fourth-quarter over fourth-quarter basis. *Reuters*

EXPORTERS' URGENT APPEAL
to OUR SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN
to AMEND THE ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING ACT

The Filipino exporters and the country's $35-billion worth of exports face grim prospects should you fail to pass into law amendments to the Anti Money Laundering Act of 2001 (R.A. 9160).

The entire export sector will be a victim of sanctions that the international financial community will impose on us should the Philippines continue to be in the FATF watchlist.

Consider this:

- **All our buyers principally in Japan, the United States, United Kingdom, Germany and Hong Kong will be subjected to stringent identification requirements before they can send payments on ordered goods. More than two-thirds of our exports go to countries strictly adhering to the FATF standards;**
- **All transactions involving corporations and individuals from the Philippines will undergo more stringent and time-consuming processes and reporting system; and worse,**
- **Other businesses in those countries will be discouraged from either investing in the Philippines or dealing with Filipino businessmen.**

Your Honors, the export sector, after suffering a serious setback in 2001, rebounded strongly with a Nine Percent (9%) growth last year, saving jobs for thousands of workers and helping spur overall economic growth.

Our hopes to sustain that momentum will all be dashed if we are subjected to international sanctions. We cannot afford to take the chance!

It is unfortunate that the Philippines remains in the list of only eleven (11) economies across the globe not cooperating in the global war against the flow of dirty money.

We implore the lawmakers to immediately enact the amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering Act and ensure that the Philippines is removed from the watchlist.

(SGD) **Reynaldo Paulino**, President
Assoc. of Accessory Mfrs. & Exporters
of the Philippines (AAMEP)

(SGD) **Sherwin Yu**, President
Association of Philippine Leather
Goods Exporter & Mftrs. (APLEM)

(SGD) **Lita Quisumbing**, President
Cebu Furniture Industries
Foundation, Inc

(SGD) **Minerva S. Yuvienco**, President
Cebu Garments Industry
Association (CGIA)

(SGD) **Jennifer P. Cruz**, President
Cebu Gifts Toys & Houseware
Mftr. & Exporters Association

(SGD) **Artemio Disini**, President
Chamber of Mines of the Philippines

(SGD) **Marlene Villareal**, President
Christmas Décor Exporters
Association of the Philippines

(SGD) **George Sly**, President
Confederation of Garments
Exporters of the Philippines

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Exporters Association

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Foreign Buyers Association
of the Philippines (FOBAP)

(SGD) **Asuncion Kalalo**, Chairman
Garments Business Association
of the Philippines (GBAP)

(SGD) **Benjarpin F. Kalalo, Jr.**, President
GTH Phils

(SGD) **Mercedes Llamas**, President
Guild of Philippine Jewellers, Inc. (GUILD)

(SGD) **Luis S. Sicat**, Chairman
Home Accents Corp.
of the Philippines, Inc. (HAPI)

(SGD) **Marielou S. Florendo**, President
Integrated Food Manufacturing
of the Philippines in Productivity

(SGD) **Abe Ng Cinco**, President
Marble Association
of the Philippines (MAP)

(SGD) **Peter Zuñiga**, President
Meycauayan Jewelry Industry
Association, Inc. (MJIAI)

(SGD) **Ann Pamintuan**, President
Mindanao Trade Expo Foundation

(SGD) **Rafael Villareal**, Exec. Director
Motor Vehicle Parts Manufacturers
Association of the Philippines

(SGD) **Jose Ma. Gaston**, President
Philexport, Bacolod Chapter

(SGD) **Mediatrix Villanueva**, President
Philexport, Bicol Chapter

(SGD) **Paul Ragay**, President
Philexport, Cagayan De Oro Chapter

(SGD) **Rolando Valenzuela**, President
Philexport, Cagayan Valley Chapter

(SGD) **Mariano Villa-Real**, President
Philexport, CALABARZON Chapter

(SGD) **Gregorio Orihuela, Jr.**, President
Philexport, CARAGA Chapter

(SGD) **Allan Suarez**, President
Philexport, Cebu Chapter

(SGD) **Florentino Torres**, Chairman
Philexport, Central Luzon Chapter

(SGD) **Epifania Daoey**, President
Philexport, Cordillera Autonomous
Region Chapter

(SGD) **Ann Pamintuan**, President
Philexport, Davao Chapter

(SGD) **Susan P. Tan**, President
Philexport, Iloilo Chapter

(SGD) **Epitacio T. Lloren**, President
Philexport, Leyte Chapter

(SGD) **Jaime Talagtag**, President
Philexport, MIMAROPA Chapter

(SGD) **Mariano M. Aguinaldo**, President
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(SGD) **Veres Antoinette Hortelano**, President
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of Handcraft, Inc. (PCHI)

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Philippine Food Processors & Exporters
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(SGD) **Roberto Amores**, President
Philippine Mango Exporters Foundation

(SGD) **Rosalinda Miguel**, President
Philippine Toy And Novelty Manufacturers
Association, Inc. (PHILTOY)

(SGD) **Ernesto Santiago**, Exec. Director
Semiconductor and Electronics Industries
in the Philippines, Inc. (SEIPI)

(SGD) **Claro C. Arriola**, President
Textile Mills Association
of the Philippines (TMAP)

(SGD) **Francisco Buencamino**, Exec. Director
Tuna Canners Association of the Philippines

(SGD) **Sergio R. Ortiz-Luis, Jr., President**
Philippine Exporters Confederation of the Philippines
(PHILEXPORT)

Iraq looms large on Wall Street

NEW YORK—Iraq looms large on Wall Street this week as the threat of war builds and investors try to see signs of an improving economy and company profits.

Corporate outlooks have been wary at best, and there has been little economic data to provide stock strategists or company chieftains enough to say the economy is fully on the mend.

Even strong economic data, such as a government report on Friday that showed US payrolls surged at the fastest rate in more than two years in January, is unlikely to change the sour mood. The report sparked a rally that barely lasted half an hour.

With the United States increasing the pressure on Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to cooperate with the United Nations over banned weapons, the march to a showdown with Iraq will dominate the market this week, analysts said.

UN inspectors Hans Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei are due to report to the Security Council next Friday on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs after their trip to Baghdad this weekend.

"It will continue for two weeks as the various scenarios play out, as the inspectors return to Baghdad, and then report back to the Security Council, said Al Kugel, senior investment strategist at Stein Roe Investment Counsel. "At that point, unless Iraq starts to cooperate, we will be moving to a campaign at the end of the month.

Stocks fell for the fourth straight week in a row, sending the broad market gauges to fresh lows last seen in October. The blue-chip Dow Jones industrial average is now down more than 11 percent since a short-lived new year's rally peaked on Jan. 14, and off almost 6 percent for the year. *Reuters*

UPS expects to lay off 100 pilots by Sept.

LOUISVILLE, Kentucky—United Parcel Service will lay off 100 pilots by this fall, the Independent Pilots Association said.

According to Capt. Bob Miller, the president of the Louisville-based pilots association, 19 UPS Airlines pilots were given 30-day notices on Friday. Another 81 pilots will be let go, Miller said.

UPS spokesman Mark Giuffre said the company is looking to complete the process by September.

"This decision is really based on two key issues," Giuffre said. "The more modern aircraft only require two pilots. The older aircraft needed three pilots and that has created a surplus for us."

The other issue is decrease in shipping volume, Giuffre said.

"We didn't really feel that this was a necessary step," Miller said. "Domestic (service) has been a little flat but international has been going very well."

UPS and the association, which represents 2,520 UPS pilots, has been negotiating a new contract since October 2002.

"This will have some bearing on the negotiations," Miller said. "It's another issue that comes into play."

The pilots' contract falls under the National Railway Labor Act and does not expire, but reaches what is called an "amendable date," when provisions are subject to change, on Dec. 31. It's not uncommon for contract talks to continue for years past the amendable date. Strikes can be authorized only as a last resort.

Giuffre said the layoffs, which the company has been considering for months, have nothing to do with the current contract situation.

"Over the last year and a half the economy has been relatively stagnant," he said. *AP*

Philips to post '02 loss

AMSTERDAM—Europe's largest consumer electronics maker Philips is likely to publish a steep fourth quarter loss on Tuesday as a result of collapsing share prices and a weak economy, giving a full year result worse than its sea of red ink in 2001.

Income from operations in 2002 are seen marginally positive, which analysts consider a disappointing outcome after its new chief executive forecast "all kinds of black (numbers)" 12 months ago.

This time analysts expect CEO Gerard Kleisterlee to stick with his earlier, cautious outlook for a positive operating income in 2003.

It might prove too cautious as some analysts hope the company will do much better this year than in the last two years. This should be the result of a lower cost base, lower restructuring charges, a strong upturn in medical systems and a recovering market for semiconductors in which Philips is a global top 10 player.

"I expect Philips could book quite a significant operating profit this year, but Kleisterlee will choose to be cautious because there are two major issues he doesn't control: the currencies and the wider economy including a possible war," said analyst Eric de Graaf at ING, who rates the shares "buy."

The sprawling conglomerate, well-known for its light bulbs, shavers, DVD recorders, toasters and flat screen TVs, but which is also active in monitors and hospital equipment, has shed many activities in the past years and has more recently decided to outsource low-margin manufacturing.

After a decade of restructuring, the electronics group is expected to take a fourth quarter charge of another 480 million euros, this time mainly designed to streamline its loss-making semiconductors and components units which are slowly recovering from the chip sector's worst ever downturn.

Profit from operations for all of 2002, including restructuring charges which Philips regards as part of normal operations, is expected at an average 334 million euros, according to a Reuters poll of nine analysts. *Reuters*

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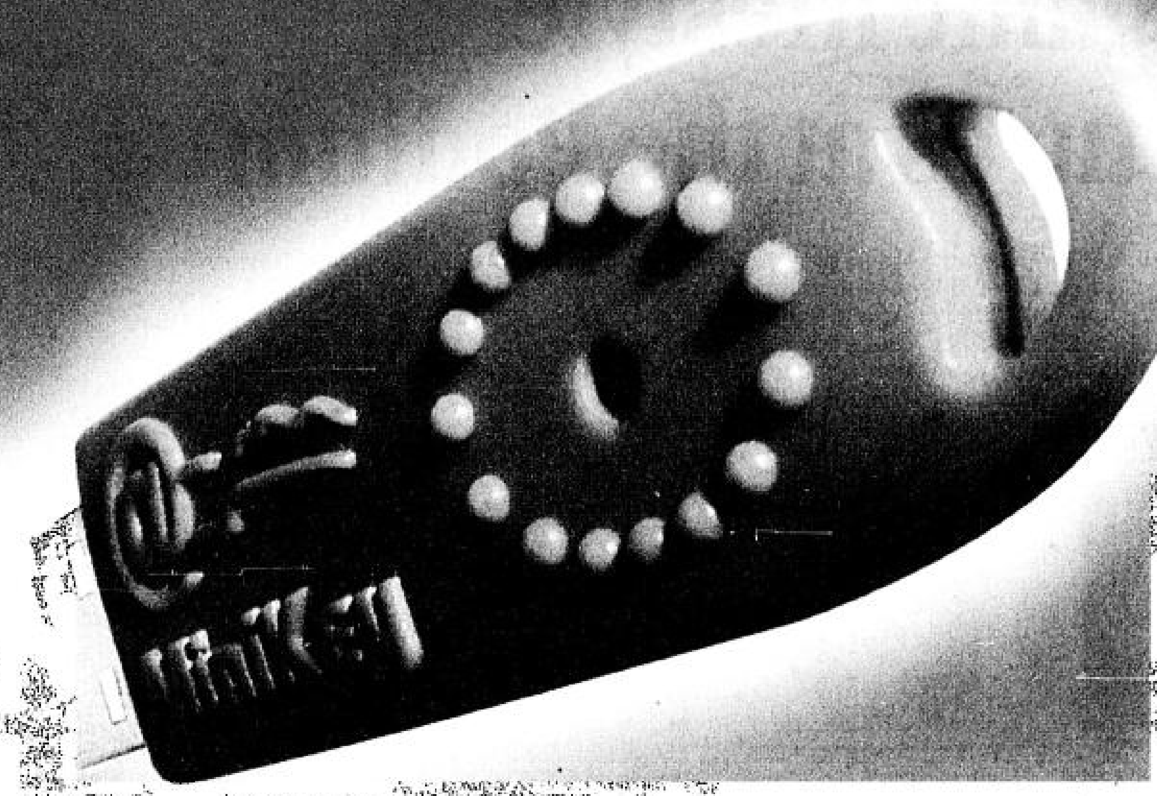

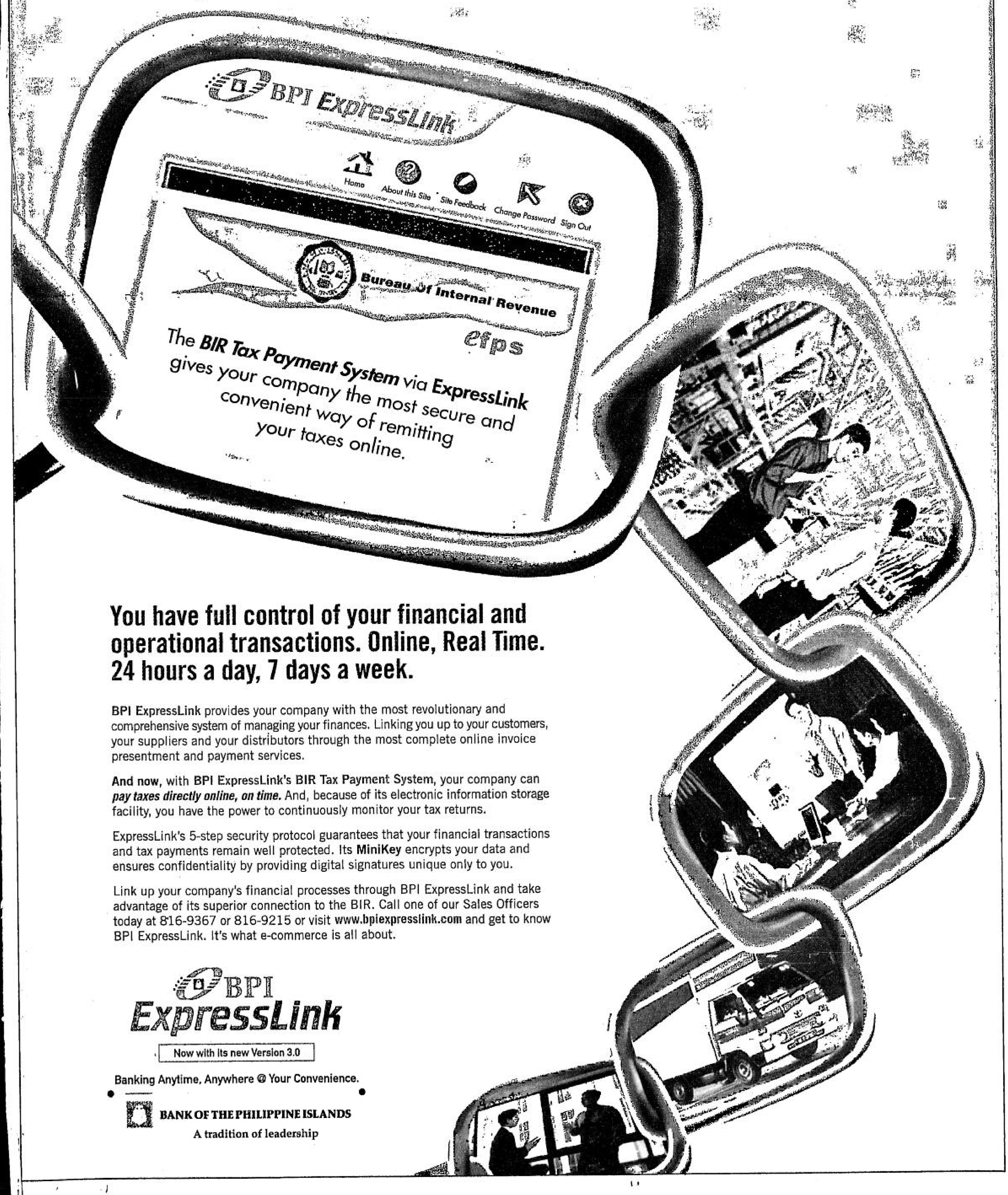

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Organic lifestyle lectures at the Podium

VISITORS to the Opta Organic Lifestyle Weekend Market at the Podium will not only enjoy shopping for things organic, but also have a chance to learn more about its advantages in a series of lectures this February and March.

SHAI Tamayo of My Goodness will share her insights on organically grown vegetables and vegetarian cuisine and likewise conduct a cooking demonstration on Feb. 15.

EVA Pua, Opta board of trustee and president of Everrich Farms, will discuss free range chicken growing, its health, environmental benefits and many other aspects of free range chicken farming on March 15. She will also conduct a cooking demonstration.

LEARN more about the relevance of organic farming with Opta president Rosalina Tan on March 1.

PROFESSOR Armand Basug, head of Task Force on Solid Waste Management of UP Diliman, demonstrates how to convert waste into organic fertilizer.

Open to the public for free, all presentations start at 9:30 a.m. at the tent of the Organic Café Al Fresco at the weekend market site. Subjects range from waste management to organic vegetables to range chicken growing to an overview of the organic industry in the Philippines.

The series began last Feb. 1 with a talk on waste management by professor Armand Basug, head of the University of the Philippines' Task Force on Waste Management. Professor Basug explained to the participants the benefits of reducing waste, composting, and producing organic fertilizer.

On Feb. 15, Shai Tamayo will speak on organic vegetable power – how organically grown food plays a key role in the health of one's body, mind and spirit. She will share with the audience valuable information on how one's diet affects one's well or hell being, and how to apply the organic lifestyle principles in one's lifestyle in the most practical ways.

Shai, who takes charge of My Goodness, which offers vegetarian food-to-go, as well as delicious but healthy cookies, will also have a cooking demo of scrumptious recipes made from organically grown foodstuff.

Opta president Rosalina Tan, on the other hand, will be giving her insights on the relevance of organic farming, as well as Opta's role in promoting the organic lifestyle on March 1.

Through organic farming, and one's adherence to the organic lifestyle, Ms Tan believes that "we can more embrace our desire for simple living. Living a simple life is righteous, balanced and harmonious."

Rounding off the series on March 15 is a lecture and cooking demo on free range chicken growing by Eva Pua, Opta board of trustee and president of Everich Farms.

Organic chicken farming is attuned to nature's way, leading to a better appreciation of healthy living in a healthy environment. As such, organic chicken are fed with food-based feed ingredients and grown without the use of synthetic growth promotants and antibiotics. These are likewise raised in the open range to partake plant and soil nutrients as feed supplements. Consequently, organic chicken is packed with more nutrients yet layered with less cholesterol.

Ms Pua will be speaking on free range chicken growing as well as its health and environmental benefits.

Opta @ The Podium Organic Café Al Fresco is located beside the mall in front of Banco de Oro in Julia Vargas Avenue, Mandaluyong City.

MMDA TALKS WITH NEWSPAPER ORGANIZATIONS

As a follow-up to the top-level meeting between MMDA chair Bayani Fernando and Inquirer publisher Mr Isagani Yambot together with PPI executive officers, MMDA's Bobby Esquivel (seated, third from left) recently sat down with the Circulation Managers and Dealers Ethics Committee to discuss ways to modernize and professionalize newspaper vending throughout Metro Manila while supporting MMDA's beautification efforts and the newspapers' role as much-needed purveyors of news and information. Among the organizations represented during the meeting were the Newspaper, Magazine, Comics Dealers Association of the Philippines (NMCDAP); the Circulation Managers Association of the Phils. (CMAP); and the Circualtion Managers' Group (CMG). Also shown in photo are (seated, from left) Fernando Lopez (Philippine Star); Ben Tablanan (NMCDAP); Cecile Bulacan (Journal Group); Rose Fernando (CMAP); Bien Baltazar (Inquirer). In back row are (from left) Alfredo Deogracias (Malaya); Carlito Sala (Pilipino Star Ngayon); Agustin Biñegas (Bulgar); Digo Cardiño (Abante); Shiela Remitar (PPI); Emiyano Ponce Jr. (MMDA), Marianito Lumayno (NMCDAP); Rosendo Reyes (MMDA); Emiliano Galos (NMCDAP); Marcelino Minor (Abante), Philip Mendoza (NMCDAP) and Carlito Corro (NMCDAP).

Macau Resto Libis celebrates kung hei fat choy

MACAU Restaurant-Libis, the only restaurant serving Macanese cuisine in the country, celebrated on Feb. 1 the Chinese new year with a bang.

To pump up the diners and aficionados and demonstrate to them the Dragon and Lion dance, Macau Restaurant brought up a professional Dragon and Lion dance troupe that impressed the audience with its portrayal of how the mystical animal in Chinese lore combated the evil spirits.

Chinese lanterns and pineapple decors around the Macau Restaurant created a unique Chinese ambience.

Of course, the Chinese new year celebration would never be complete without mouth watering Macanese and other Chinese dishes. Macau Restaurant said the rationale in serving a huge wide variety of dishes is that the beginning of the year should be celebrated with abundance so there will be an abundance of blessings for the rest of the year. Furthermore, Macau Restaurant, wants to bring awareness to its clientele that the abundance of food should be appreciated.

Macau Restaurant presented an array of 40+dishes to its loyal clientele for a price of P450+. The buffet consisted of starters; soup; special dishes; noodles and dessert. Namely, famous Macanese specialties which are steamed pearl fish, Macanese rice, grilled salmon stripes, African chicken, Portuguese chicken stew, roasted duck, chicken barbecue, shrimp Sichuan, deep fried shrimps, chili crab, lechon and many more.

Macau Restaurant led by owner George Pua and operations manager Michael Lu said they were satisfied with the huge turnout of their clients to join them in celebrating the Chinese new year and the 2nd anniversary of Macau Restaurant in Eastwood City walk, Libis in Quezon City.

KGAI SIGNS MOA WITH ABS-CBN

Kuryente Grafix Advertising Inc. and ABS-CBN, the official marketing arm and official media network, respectively, of the Panagbenga 2003 Baguio Flower Festival, recently signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Photo shows (from left) Ms Michelle Ku (ABS-CBN RNG festival events head); Mr Jerry Bennett (ABS-CBN director – RNG Luzon cluster); Mr Dexter Lim (KGAI vice president); Ms Vivian Fabian (KGAI media manager).

Merk's launches membership privilege card

MERK'S Bar Bistro, a destination of choice at Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center, launched its Club Merk Privilege Card membership program last Jan. 31. It is the establishment's offering for the grand opening of Greenbelt in Makati on the same day. The card is another exciting "dish" that awaits regulars and music lovers who patronize the place for its great live entertainment and excellent Filipino cuisine, courtesy of the renowned Bistro Remedios of Malate.

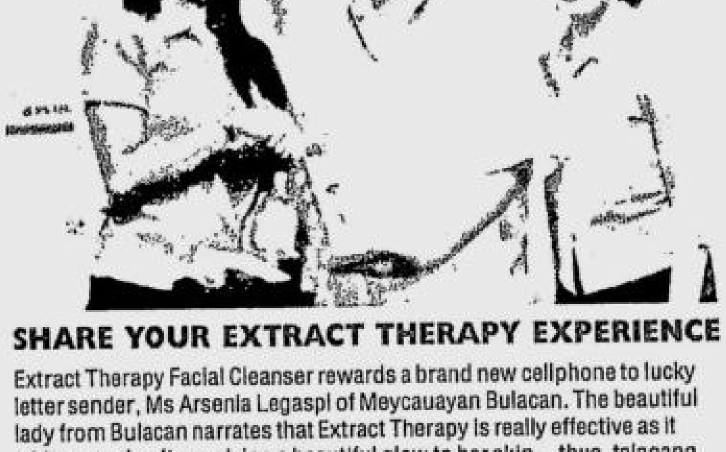
The Club Merk Privilege Card is a personal gateway to a live music experience in a more intimate setting. It makes an ideal treat for one's self and a unique gift for friends, as it is good for one year and renewable at a special rate.

The minimal membership fee entitles the cardholder to an exclusive privilege of 10 percent off on cash ad credit. Other benefits includes a lunch gift certificate for 2, a complimentary dish birthday treat, donation to a children's fund in the member's name, invitations to special events and cocktails at Merk's, discount on ticket shows, a bottlekeep of Chivas Regal and Carlos Primero at a discounted price, newsletter, jazz club membership, cinema tickets, promo-gift for CD purchase at Music One, plus more to come.

Open a new world for yourself, your friends and loved ones especially in the month devoted for love such as February. Seal your bonding with "love bracelets" and other interesting items during the card launch and valentine promotion at Merk's. Interested parties may call 757-4720 and 757-4721 for inquiries and information.

MSA IS NOW ISO CERTIFIED

Mr Renato V. Navarrete, the managing director of Certification International awarded the certificate to Mr Gerard S. Alferez, the quality management representative for MSA and to Merle S. Alferez, the founder. Neville-Clarke Philippines is the consulting firm of MSA.



SHARE YOUR EXTRACT THERAPY EXPERIENCE

Extract Therapy Facial Cleanser rewards a brand new cellphone to lucky letter sender, Ms Arsenia Legaspi of Meycauayan Bulacan. The beautiful lady from Bulacan narrates that Extract Therapy is really effective as it whitens and softens giving a beautiful glow to her skin...thus, talagang 'dulot ay higit sa linis...lunas.' Shown from left: Ms Arsenia Legaspi, winner; Mr Byron Ceralde, Extract brand manager; and Ms Jeanne Tanos, personal care category manager.

VMUF honors service awardees

THE VIRGEN Milagrosa University Foundation (VMUF) in San Carlos, Pangasinan, marks another milestone when it celebrates its 45th foundation anniversary from Feb. 12 to 22 with the theme "VMUF: Fortified at 45 in Education and Health Care". One of the highlights of the annual celebration is the Mister and Miss VMUF 2003 on Feb. 15, aside from the 1st grand alumni homecoming slated on Feb. 22. Other activities include bloodletting, a thanksgiving mass, talent night for Mister and Miss VMUF 2003 candidates, medical-dental activities, cheer dance competition, musical competitions, students' night, well-baby contest, literary contests (oration, declamation), quiz bee, and on-the-spot-poster making contest. Noontime show "Eat Bulaga" 'invades' the VMUF as an opening salvo on its foundation anniversary celebration on Feb. 11.

Free workshops for models with potentials

DO YOU want to be the next super model? Or do you simply want to see yourself on TV endorsing a certain product? Come avail yourself of free workshops that Quecara conducts for aspiring models with potentials (read: you've got the X-factor) every Saturday from 1 to 5 p.m. Started December 2002, this free workshop aims to help aspiring models who want to jumpstart their career in modeling.

Quecara continues to hold this free workshop, as this has become an excellent venue for Quecara Production & Talent Agency to discover new faces. Designed to equip aspirants the skills needed in modeling, Quecara's modules for four consecutive Saturdays are: physical grooming, mental grooming, good attitude, and modeling skills.

The workshop is handled by Quecara's fashion and image consultants who will package you to your more suited field, such as ramp modeling, print or image modeling, or in TV/movies.

An aspirant who finishes all four Saturdays of the workshop will be considered an in-house talent of Quecara, subject to the results of the training. For those who only need the training just for personality development, a fee of P200 per session will be charged.

Whether you want to do the catwalk, or dream of endorsing a product or be a TV/movie personality, and you feel you have what it takes, trust Quecara's professionals to fashion you into any of those.

For more details, look for Raul Tabora or Henry Oytas at Unit 2, third floor, AC Raftel Center, 8193 Dr. Santos Avenue, Paranaque City, or call 892-8251.

PIGROLAC PRODUCT LAUNCH

Pigrolac Hog Feeds held a product launch last Jan. 17 in Albay Hotel, Legazpi City. The title of the launch was 'Early Wean, Mama Pro, Pigrolac Hog Feeds'

Rotary International gears up for Discon 2003

THE ANNUAL Rotary International District 3830 Conference is fast approaching. The Rotary Club of Palanyag-Parañaque takes pride in hosting Discon 2003 to be held on March 14 to 15, at the Westin Philippine Plaza. This two-day event intends to gather Rotarians anew in the spirit of love and fellowship in celebration of yet another fruitful year of achieving RI service goals. This is in keeping with Rotary International's theme "Sow the Seeds of Love." The celebratory handle for Discon 2003 will be "Let Us Celebrate Love."

This early, under the helm of vice mayor Florencio M. Bernabe Jr., Discon 2003 chair, the club has gone all out in its preparations. Expected to participate are Rotarians comprising District 3830, dignitaries, guests and our major industry partners. Invited speakers are Tourism secretary Richard Gordon, Congressman Ed Zialcita, Parañaque City Mayor Joey Marquez, RI president representative John M. Pinson and other prominent personalities and VIPs gracing the event. Insightful discussions on vital issues, special production numbers and awards have likewise been prepared to entertain guests and celebrate our rich Filipino heritage. To be showcased are the time-honored sunduan and sambalilo of Palanyag, spiced by the exciting participation of Parañaque beauties and the traditional Palanyag hospitality. Indeed this year's Discon promises to be a joyful event, an absolute feast to the senses.

With this fresh approach, the District hopes to generate renewed interests and re-invigorated participation in the District Conference among Rotarians. The Rotary Clubs of District 3830 also want the general public to take notice so that this event can attract more youth towards Rotary in general and to our community in particular. This serves as their testament of deep concern for society, in the true spirit of "service above self" through their projects, which include: polio-vaccine campaign, medical and dental mission, river clean-up, countryside tree-planting, recycling and waste segregation and management, out-of-school youth programs and the service to handicapped and disabled members of our society.

There will be road shows to the sixty-six clubs within RI District 3830 headed by three Rotarians from the Rotary Club of Palanyag-Parañaque, who have not only consistently preached values of love but have also made consistent stands for the mission of the Rotary. With Discon 2003, they will not only continue to sow the seeds but will now reap and celebrate love with fellow Rotarians. They are District governor Romeo Valdez Cruz; the president of the host club, Rotary Club of Palanyag-Parañaque, Noli Aldip; and Discon 2003 chair and vice mayor of Parañaque, Jun Bernabe. For inquiries and registration, you can contact the governor's office at tel. nos. 826-7453, 826-7149 or email rvc@gemphil.com or gti@gemphil.com. For sponsorship, you may call Charisms Inc. at tel. nos. 817-1317; 843-7205 or telefax 817-1321 or 843-7207.

CEBU CONTENDER

DEFINING MOMENTS TO CELEBRATE

It's a new world of defining moments for the International Marketing Group (IMG) from Feb. 21 to 23 at Cebu Plaza, Nivel Hills in Lahug, Cebu City. It is IMG's first annual international convention, fourth contender school and X-wave meeting. Qualified IMG members from different parts of the Philippines are enjoined to attend this gathering and bond with members from other countries. The fourth contender school will focus on empowering members to be more productive in sales and attain their goals. Members will again be grouped in teams in a friendly competition to motivate them to work harder for a common goal and become builders themselves. To facilitate the forthcoming contender school and X-wave meeting is master builder Xuan Nguyen. Shown is the winning blue team taken during the third contender school.

Toshiba is leading notebook computer in the country

TOSHIBA is once again the no. 1 notebook computer in the Philippine for the third quarter of the year 2002. According to International Data Corp. (IDC), Toshiba achieves the no. 1 position in Q3/2002 with a market share of 36.1 percent based on the Pilippines' total notebook units shipment. Toshiba has been consistently on the no. 1 spot since the first half of 2002 (H1 2002), with a market share of 30.0 percent for the Philippines' total notebook units shipment.

Toshiba upholds its international standards of service and high technology with an array of notebook computer models to choose from. These include the Satellite 2410 Series, Portege 2000, Portege 4010, Tecra 9100, TE 2100 and the latest Pocket PC e310. Toshiba assures all notebook computer customers convenient services and support. Toshiba also provides online assistance at pc.toshiba-asia.com for immediate solution to technical questions.

For orders and other inquiries, visit the display of the latest models and other products of Tricom Dynamics Inc., the exclusive local distributor of Toshiba notebook computers, copiers and facsimile located at Metro House Building, 345 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City. Telephone numbers 890-6525 to 30 or email at toshiba.pc.mktg@tricom.com.ph. You can also visit the following websites: pc.toshiba-asia.com and www.tricom.com.ph.

Product FILES

Crayola is crayon of the year

THE NATIONAL Consumers Choice Foundation awarded Crayola Crayons with its Consumers Choice Award for being the Top Crayon Brand of the Year for the year 2002. Given in recognition of the product's quality and its commitment to excellence, the award highlights Crayola's commitment in enhancing the Filipino children's power of creativity through the use of crayons in letting their imaginations soar. Crayola crayons has called the Philippines home for over 40 years now, and is settling in for another forty years of fun and happiness with children and adults alike. Aside from enhancing the children's creative minds, Crayola also looks out for the children's health by making sure that all Crayola products are non-toxic and safe for kids of all ages. Amalgamated Specialties Corp. (Amspec) manufactures Crayola and other school and office supplies.

Bell joins Mindshare Philippines

AS MINDSHARE Philippines celebrates its 3rd birthday, the team officially welcomes its newest colleague, Stephanie Bell.

MindShare is the media specialist agency of the WPP group, one of the world's largest communication groups, and is one of the leading media agencies in the Philippines. MindShare Philippines services a multitude of international and local clients across several market categories handling all the necessary media planning and buying requirements of each client.

Stephanie is a UK national and has worked in both the United Kingdom and central Europe markets. She brings with her a wealth of experience including time spent as media director of Saatchi/Zenith and launching Starcom in Hungary. She also has experience as a media vendor coming from the RTL group where she was sales director for the leading TV station in Hungary.

Stephanie's role in helping the company's market position is further strengthened by the company's dedication to deliver the most competitive, strategic and creative media services.

Stephanie feels these are interesting times for the advertising and media market – media is becoming more and more a priority to advertisers in the Philippines who are looking to get the best possible value for their ad spend whilst compromising nothing in terms of quality of service and creativity of thinking. According to Stephanie, MindShare is a fantastic team to join, adding not only is it great to work with dedicated and smart professionals, but also to know it has the clout and the creativity to lead the market in delivering gold standard services to its clients and ensuring its competitive advantage.

SIGNED, SEALED, DELIVERED

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. took delivery of 140 brand new Suzuki Bravo Utility Vans during a simple turnover ceremony held at the PLDT office at the Ramon Cojuangco Building along Makati Avenue in Makati City Jan. 17, wherein Heidelberg Motors president Eliseo C. Ocampo Jr. handed over the keys of the vehicles to PLDT president Manuel V. Pangilinan. The Suzuki Bravo Utility Van is a special version of the Suzuki Bravo that was packaged specifically for PLDT by Heidelberg Motors Corp., authorized dealer of GMC, Suzuki, Opel, and Subaru, in collaboration with body maker Centro Manufacturing Corp. PLDT president Manuel V. Pangilinan (right) is shown accepting the keys to a brand new Suzuki Bravo Utility Van from Heidelberg Motors Corp. president Eliseo C. Ocampo Jr. Interested buyers of Suzuki Bravo Utility Vans can visit the Heidelberg Motors Corp. showroom at 2296 Pasong Tamo Extension, Makati City.

UP AIESEC ALUMNAE LUNCHEON

Secretary of Energy, Vince Perez, formerly national committee president of Aiesec Philippines, joined his fellow UP Aiesec alumnae in a luncheon held last Dec. 6. In attendance were (seated, from left): Bobbie Angangco, Bing Betita, Kippy Mathay, Dina Paterno, Vince Perez, Dada Cua; (standing, from left): Talmy Cruz, Tessa Malabanan, Tissa Tan, Oli Jacinto, Bet Santos, Mike Valdez, Tony Jacinto.

A DIFFERENT SALON AND SPA EXPERIENCE

Salon Prive with its partner Body & Soul announces its newly opened Salon & Spa at Fraserplace. Truly a tandem to beat, the salon boasts of its elegant setup and uniquely themed spa rooms, a must-see for those aiming for privacy and well-deserved break. For inquiries, call 815-1857 or visit unit 2901 Fraserplace, Valero Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City. Shown during the launch are Paul Walters of Body & Soul and Geoff Simpson of Salon Prive, talent manager Wowie Roxas, Melody Camiling of MZET Production, and actress Glydel Mercado is also shown with Body & Soul's advertising and promotions manager Charmaine A. Neri.

CHARTER OFFICERS OF ROTARACT CLUB OF BLUE EAGLES INDUCTED

The charter officers of the Rotaract Club of Blue Eagles (RAC BE) were inducted on Dec. 8 by Rotary District 3810 Rotaract Chairman Gilbert Yupangco. Present during the ceremony is Rotary Club of Manila Bay Director and RAC BE Founder Lulu Moguei, District Rotaract Representative Oliver Alvarez and guest Rotaractors. Charter officers inducted were President Christopher M. Lagman, Vice President Geoffrey D. Aguila, Secretary Chrysnan N. Borras, Treasurer Symonette R. Lim, Director Mel G. Liesol II, Director Fredricke B. Pusong, Director Niño Paul Daniel T. Reyes, Director Ma. Cecilia B. Candaliza. Member Felipe Yadao, Jr. and Edilberto Z. Amparado were also inducted during the said occasion.

THE PULSE OF BUSINESS
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DHL TIES UP WITH GLOBE

DHL Worldwide Express Philippines Corp. (DHL Philippines), the world's leading air express company, and GlobeSolutions recently signed a partnership agreement that will allow Globe Telecom subscribers to instantly trace their DHL packages through their mobile phones. Dubbed m-Track, the SMS-based DHL shipment tracking service can be availed of by keying in DHL <space> and the subscribers' 10-digit airway bill and sending it to access number 2333. Shown is DHL Worldwide Express Philippines national marketing manager May Cuevas (center, left) signing the contract with GlobeSolutions assistant vice president-corporate sales and marketing Maridol Ylanan (center, right). Looking on are DHL Philippines Communications manager Miriam Valero (seated, left), GlobeSolutions marketing manager Baby Sto. Domingo (seated, right), DHL Philippines Network Administrator Jun Ramirez (back row, left) and GlobeSolutions solutions manager Larina Supnet (back row, right).

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(PDI-Feb. 10, 17, & 24 2003)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given regarding the loss of Summit Publishing Company Inc. O.R. #s 6851-6900 and P.R. #s 4951-5000 and SH Publications Inc. O.R. #s 3601-3650 and P.R. #s 01951-02000. Any transactions covered these shall be dishonored by the companies mentioned.

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Accreditation forms may be secured from **MR. ISABELO C. RODRIGUEZ**, Property Officer at the telephone numbers and address stated below.

Pre-bidding conference shall be held **February 21, 2003, 10:00 a.m.** at NMIC Central Office Conference Room. Deadline for submission of bid documents shall be on February 24, 2003, 10:00 a.m. at which time and date bids shall be opened at NMIC Central Office Conference Room. Bidders are required to post a 5% bond of the total bid price.

All interested parties may submit bid documents to:

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The NMIC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any formalities therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) DR. MINDA S. MANANTAN
Chairperson, NMIC-BAC

(PDI-Feb. 8, 9 & 10, 2003)

NOTICE OF TENDER OFFER TO THE STOCKHOLDERS OF PHILSTAR.COM, INC.

(Formerly Selecta Dairy Products, Inc.)

To All Shareholders of PHILSTAR.COM, Inc. ("Philstar")

Please be informed that on 20 December 2003, JEG Development Corporation ("JEG") and MAI-I Resources Corporation ("MAI-I") acquired from RFM Corporation, 93,390,193 and 124,099,755 common shares of stock, respectively, of Philstar constituting in the aggregate approximately 96.71% of the issued and outstanding capital stock of Philstar.

In compliance with the Securities Regulation Code and its implementing rules, JEG and MAI-I (collectively the "Bidders") are undertaking a Tender Offer in favor of all stockholders of Philstar as of 31 January 2003, other than the Bidders, at the price of P0.482781 per share. The Tender Offer covers 7,390,099 common shares of stock of Philstar owned by stockholders other than the Bidders, constituting approximately 3.29% of the issued and outstanding capital stock of Philstar. The consideration is payable by 24 March 2003.

Stockholders as of January 31, 2003 (the "Record Date") may tender all or a portion of their Philstar common shares for acceptance and purchase by the Bidders under the Terms Of The Tender Offer, beginning at 9:00 a.m. of February 10, 2003 until 3:00 p.m. of March 14, 2003 (the "Tender Offer Period"). This period will not be extended.

Tendering stockholders of Philstar who hold stock certificates ("Scrip Stockholders") should submit within the Tender Offer Period the duly accomplished Application To Sell Shares to be sent to the stockholders and all documents required under the Terms Of The Tender Offer to Securities Transfer Services, Inc. (the "Depository"), at 4th Floor, Benpress Bldg., Exchange Road corner Meralco Avenue, Pasig City with Fax No. 871-7148 (Contact Persons Mr. Angelo G. Macabuhay (02) 449-6040, Ms. Menchie Millares (02) 449-6155 and Mr. Eduardo Castro (02) 449-6169).

Scripless Stockholders, i.e. shareholders whose shares are held by brokers under their respective Philippine Central Depository accounts must authorize their respective brokers (the "Participating Brokers") to sell their shares under the Terms Of The Tender Offer and in accordance with the instructions to Participating Brokers to be provided. Participating Brokers must accomplish and file the Application To Sell Shares on behalf of the tendering Scripless Stockholders to ATR-Kim Eng Securities, Inc. (the "Broker") at 17/F Tower One and Exchange, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, with Telephone No. 849-8888, Fax No. 848-5285 (Contact persons: Ms. Nilaida S. Enriquez and Ms. Rosalie O. dela Cruz), together with all documents required under the Terms Of The Tender Offer.

Scripless Stockholders must also cause their Participating Broker to electronically transfer their tendered Philstar shares to the Broker prior to 3:00 p.m. of 14 March 2003. The Broker shall hold their Philstar shares as custodian under the Tender Offer.

Defective applications (such as but not limited to those where there is a discrepancy between specimen signatures provided), must be corrected within the Tender Offer Period to avoid rejection. Hence, shareholders are strongly urged to tender their shares at the earliest possible time to ensure that any defect in the Application To Sell Shares may still be corrected. Shareholders are also urged tp provide or indicate their telephone or contact numbers in their respective application forms to allow the Depository or the Participating Broker, as the case may be, to inform them immediately of any deficiency in their applications.

Payment of tendered shares covered by accepted Applications to Sell Shares will be on 24 March 2003 by check through the Paying Agent, Securities Transfer Agent, Inc. at its address stated above. Any payment not collected within thirty (30) calendar days from 24 March 2003 shall be dispatched by registered mail to the last recorded address of the tendering stockholder or Participating Broker, at their risk.

Tendering stockholders shall have the right to withdraw any tendered Philstar common shares in accordance with the Terms Of The Tender Offer, at any time during the Tender Offer Period or, if the tendered Philstar Shares have not been accepted for payment up to sixty (60) days from commencement of the Tender Offer Period.

The Tender Offer is subject to the terms of conditions described in the Terms of the Tender Offer and in case of conflict between this Notice and the Terms Of The Tender Offer, the latter shall prevail.

A Tender Offer Statement (SEC Form 19-1) will be filed at the commencement of the Offer Period with the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Philippine Stock Exchange, Inc., pursuant to the Securities Regulation Code and its implementing rules. Copies of SEC Form 19-1 will be made available at the expense of the Bidders, upon request from the Depository or the Broker.

The financial adviser of the Bidders. ATR-Kim Eng Capital Partners, Inc., has confirmed that resources are available to the Bidders sufficient to satisfy full acceptance of the tender offer.

REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION MAY BE MADE TO THE DEPOSITORY OR BROKER.

JEG DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

By:
(Sgd.) JOSE E. GARCIA
President

MAI-I RESOURCES CORPORATION

By:
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(PDI – Feb. 10, 11 & 12, 2003)

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of Cagayan de Oro City

**ON HIS 21ST DEATH ANNIVERSARY
on February 10, 2003**

Masses will be offered today,
Monday, February 10, 2003 at the following churches:

Greenhills Memorial Park, Bulua	4:00 p.m.
San Vicente Ferrer, Cugman	6:00 a.m.
San Isidro Labrador, Gusa	6:00 a.m.
Jesus Nazareno Parish, Recto Avenue	5:30 p.m.
Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Gamaman-an	6:00 a.m.
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Carmen	6:00 a.m.
St. Augustine Cathedral, Cagayan de Oro	5:00 p.m.
San Antonio de Padua, Nazareth	6:00 a.m.
Santo Niño Parish, Cogon	6:00 a.m.
Immaculate Conception, Bulua	6:00 a.m.
Carmelite Monastery, Camaman-an	6:00 a.m.
Carmelite Monastery, Bukidnon	6:30 a.m.

We, his relatives, request the friends and pious reader to join us in prayer for the eternal repose of his soul.

Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Matthew 10:39

New IT association to lead RP outsourcing ventures

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

A NEW group representing the Philippine information technology (IT) and business associations would lead the development of the country's IT-related services as an export product, an IT association told reporters recently.

Dubbed "Outsource Philippines," the private sector-led organization would unite various local associations and business groups to form a body similar to the National Association of Software and Services Companies (Nasscom) of India, said Cynthia Mamon, president of the Information Technology Association of the Philippines (ITAP).

Nasscom is the biggest organization in India that maintains close interaction with the Indian government in developing national IT policies with specific focus on software and services. The need for a body similar to Nasscom was cited in a Gartner study commissioned by the Department of Trade and Industry last year.

Mamon said the new IT association, of which ITAP is a member, is set to create a web-based directory of Philippine IT-related services as part of immediate projects lined up for 2003.

Local IT organizations have separately been promoting IT-related services to the global market. Now, all initiatives related to selling IT services and products outside of the Philippines would be done through Outsource Philippines, Mamon said.

Members of ITAP have pointed out the need for a single voice in the industry, which is currently in a global slump. The group said IT investors have often been confused about who they should contact since there are several IT organizations in the Philippines. Other IT organizations in the country include the Information Technology Foundation of the Philippines, the Digital Philippines Foundation, the Philippine Software Association and the Philippine Computer Society.

Mamon said Outsource Philippines would be working closely with the Information Technology and E-commerce Council (ITECC), the country's highest IT policymaking body. Outsource Philippines would be pushing policies related to the promotion of the local IT services industry to the global market, while ITECC would focus on policies related to the Philippine IT and communications industry as a whole.

A working group was established last month to discuss the new IT association's structure. The working group had representatives from ITAP, the Philippine Software Association, the US-RP Business Council, the European IT Service Center, the Information Technology Foundation of the Philippines, the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., the Ayala Group, Digital Philippines, the Makati Business Club, Management Association of the Philippines, Semiconductors and Electronics Industries of the Philippines Inc. and the Philippine Electronics and Telecommunications Foundation.

Mamon said the new IT association would get initial funding from foreign sources, and that it would be structured like a foundation with a board of directors.

President Macapagal-Arroyo is set to announce the executive director of the new IT association during the e-Services Philippines exhibit on Feb. 13 at the World Trade Center.

DBM project . . .

From page B18

more concerns over EWETC's plans to host a backup site of the government procurement information going through the G-EPS in a location outside of the Philippines. The G-EPS is a web-based system where eventually all Philippine government bids and procurement activities would be conducted.

In ASTI's letter to Budget Assistant Secretary Eduardo Opida dated Jan. 16, 2003, the company wanted to confirm if the "production and mirror sites as proposed by EWETC are both going to be located in the Philippines."

This similar concern was raised in an official letter to the DBM on Dec. 2, 2002, but was not addressed by agency officials up until the present, according to ASTI president Gery Favila in an interview with INQ7.net.

"This question has never been answered by the DBM officially," Favila noted.

Favila said that DBM officials maintained that bid rules prevented them from answering any queries from bidders especially when the bid was still ongoing.

In the same letter, ASTI reiterated various concerns about the project.

"Has the DBM considered the impact of locating the mirror site overseas on the business recovery approach and the ability of the Philippine government to exercise full control over access to government-owned data? Clearly, having both sites in the Philippines would offer more advantages to the Philippine government," ASTI's letter said.

In the letter, ASTI stressed that if EWETC is indeed hosting government procurement information overseas, the DBM has provisions in its terms of reference for the G-EPS project "that seem to imply that the production and mirror sites should be in the Philippines."

The letter went on to cite at least five specific provisions in the terms of reference given out to them as basis for designing their proposals to the agency.

One of the provisions states that the DBM-Procurement Service, the agency under the DBM mandated to oversee the G-EPS, "shall at all times and from time to time during normal office hours on reasonable notice be provided access to sites where deliverables or services are being developed, implemented or operated pursuant to this contract."

"It's important for the DBM to answer these questions, unless the agency considers data security as a trivial matter," Favila said.

Favila also noted that ASTI has raised the issue of government procurement information being hosted overseas during the presentation of its proposal to the DBM. The company stressed that no government would allow procurement information to be stored overseas, citing the Singapore government as an example.

But up until the present, the DBM has remained mum on the issue, even after Bayantrade.com, a member of a local consortium that lost the bid earlier, raised the same concern.

In an e-mail sent to INQ7.net, Bayantrade president Carol Carreon accused ITBF of failing to disclose "some truly substantive information in its submission of its joint venture structure," specifically concerning the company's offering, which supposedly involves US-based infrastructure and proprietary technology.

Bayantrade was part of a consortium disqualified during the evaluation of bids for the flagship project aimed at getting rid of corruption in government procurement.

ASTI, for its part, stressed that if the proposed mirror site of ITBF Philippines is overseas, the contractual provisions of the project would be difficult and impractical for the DBM to enforce.

"This creates a situation that could be grossly disadvantageous to the DBM," added Favila, stressing that all government purchases will eventually pass through the G-EPS. "If the DBM does not reply to our queries, then the bidding does not pass the test of transparency and fair play. This is a system that will be used for all government purchases. It's up to the DBM to prove that the bid was transparent and fair."

"They owe this to the IT industry which will be participating in future government bids," added Favila.

ASTI has also requested the DBM to provide the company details on how the individual members of the evaluating team of the DBM scored both the bids of ITBF and ASTI based on the categories set by the agency. ITBF narrowly won over ASTI in the evaluation of bids, in which a group getting the highest technical rating would emerge the winner.

EWETC, a member of the ITBF Philippines-led consortium, is an international technology and consulting organization.

MORTAL KOMBAT

Deadlier, bloodier than ever

MORTAL KOMBAT
DEADLY ALLIANCE

By Joey G. Alarilla

JUST how serious are Ed Boon and his team of developers about revamping the Mortal Kombat series? In their new game for next-generation consoles, they killed off franchise character Liu Kang, "Earth's mightiest warrior and champion of Mortal Kombat"—in the opening video, no less.

Poor Liu Kang, he certainly deserved a better death than the one he suffered at the hands of his old foe Shan Tsung—who did the dirty deed with the help of Quan Chi. In case you're wondering, Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance takes its name from the partnership between these two sorcerers and all-around evil-doers.

The plot revolves around the "undefeatable army" of the long-forgotten Dragon King that Quan Chi has discovered. After forming their partnership, Shan Tsung is now reviving this army with the souls of slain warriors. The two have deposed the emperor Shao Kahn and are now out to conquer Outworld and eventually Earthrealm.

The first time I loaded MKDA on my Xbox, I have to admit that it was a while before I got used to its look and combat system. Say this with me a number of times: This is not DOA (meaning Dead or Alive 3, in case you've been in a coma, but it can also stand for "dibdib of Ayane," the 5'2" babe with 37-inch breasts). MKDA is also available on PlayStation 2, GameCube and even the PS—as well as a handheld version for the Game Boy Advance.

We review this game on the XBox

The game offers big 3D environments and exotic locations that show off just how surreal the Mortal Kombat world is. Deliberately or not, however, the developers didn't push the photorealistic envelope when it comes to the look of the characters. Then again, with all the blood in this game, it might have been too horrific to use realistic characters. Remember: This game has a "Mature" rating, but you do have the option to turn off the blood, you big wuss. But what's the point in that, since blood and grisly "fatalities" have been the main factors behind the success of this fighting game since it debuted in 1992?

With MKDA, however, the Mortal Kombat gimmick now comes with a very robust combat system. What I like most about the new system is that each character knows three fighting styles. You can immediately switch from one style to the next in the heat of battle, using your controller's left trigger. Heck, you can even chain together combos that employ all your styles. Best of all, the third style is actually the character's chosen weapon. Since some styles may be more vulnerable to certain martial arts, this makes for very interesting strategies and tactical battles.

For example, Sub-Zero's styles are Shotokan, Dragon and Kori Blade, while Kung Lao employs Mantis, Shaolin Fist and Broadsword. The great thing about this set-up is that you get exposed to different flavors of martial arts. Also, it's cool that two Filipino martial arts are featured in this game. Sonya Blade's weapons are kali sticks (kali is another name for arnis) while the villainous Quan Chi uses the escrima style.

One thing you'll have to get used to when playing MKDA is that you don't block using the back arrow on the D-pad. Instead, you have to use the right trigger. This feels weird, but Mortal Kombat has always gone against the grain by using a block button. Since you can perform a lot of moves in MKDA, however, this now probably makes sense.

MKDA also features the special move which you can execute using just one button—the little black one on your Xbox controller. Some characters, which I call Vlad the Impalers, have

MORTAL/ B17

Pinoys express love via cell phone more often than other Asian users

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

FILIPINOS are not bashful when it comes to expressing love using their mobile phones.

In a recent survey covering six Asian countries, Filipinos were found to be more expressive of their love using their mobile phones compared to their Asian neighbors, after majority admitted to sending simple text messages declaring their love and admiration for their partners.

The recent Siemens Mobile Lifestyle survey indicated that more than 50 percent of the Filipino respondents were sending "I Love You" messages to their partners via short messaging service (SMS) more than their Asian counterparts, the study showed. In general, more than 30 percent of Southeast Asians said they would readily express their love through their mobile phones, while 40 percent said they have created and sent personalized ring tones to their loved ones.

The survey was conducted across six countries. It involved 1,400 respondents from Indonesia, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Respondents were from 15 to 29 years of age. The survey was conducted by independent research firm Asia Market Intelligence.

Most of the respondents said they always carried their mobile phones close to them, even during intimate moments with their partners. In fact, only 13 percent switched off their handsets when they were together with their partners.

The survey showed that mobile phone technology has become entrenched in the youth's lives, as 64 percent of the respondents said they could not live without this technology.

"The mobile phone has become firmly entrenched in their lives that when an SMS tone goes off, half of the respondents would subconsciously check their phones for messages," the survey pointed out.

With new innovations as multimedia media messaging (MMS) becoming more ubiquitous in mobile phone handsets, majority of the respondents said that they would love the idea of using new technologies to enrich their personal communication. The idea of sending pictures or video via MMS has attracted most respondents, saying that it would spice up personal communication. A quarter of the respondents liked the idea of sharing pictures of their new dates with their best friends to get a second opinion or just to show off.

Perhaps the most disturbing discovery in the study was the impact of SMS on the reading habits of the youth. It said that leisurely reading among the respondents has dropped, as 42 percent said they would rather send an SMS than read a book to kill time.

GET OVER HERE! Scorpion and company make a solid comeback in Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance which was released on all gaming consoles recently. The fatalities, the blood and great gameplay which made this game popular are all back. Everything except Liu Kang.

MORTAL KOMBAT
DEADLY ALLIANCE

Mortal Kombat . . .

From page B16

special moves with their bladed weapons that are actually unfair. If you succeed in impaling your opponent, he or she won't be able to remove the weapon and will slowly bleed to death. That's too powerful—for example, if I'm feeling sadistic, I just use Kung Lao or Sub-Zero to impale my opponent and then move away, leaving the poor guy trying to catch me before he dies.

In MKDA, you start out with 12 playable characters—the old reliables include Sonya Blade, Johnny Cage, Scorpion and Sub-Zero while the new kids on the block are Kenshi and Mavado. You can also unlock nine other regular characters—Nitara, Hsu Hao, Kitana, Jax Briggs, Reptile, Raiden, Drahmin and Cyrax. My favorite has to be the female vampire Nitara—not only does she look cool but she also gains health points every time she sucks an opponent. For grossest character, in his Drunken Fist mode fatso Bo' Rai Cho pukes (I'm talking Linda Blair-size servings) on the spot behind you, making you slip.

Unlike other fighting games like Tekken, however, you don't unlock a new character after beating the arcade mode. Instead, MKDA has an interesting Krypt system that allows you to purchase different goodies, including unlockable characters, second costumes and new arenas. When you play, you first have to create a user profile. This profile keeps track of your earnings, because you're awarded "koins" of different types when you win a fight and perform other tasks. For example, winning the first fight in a tournament—you battle 11 opponents to beat the arcade mode—might net you 100 jade koins.

As you can see, this set-up guarantees immense replay value, particularly since the coffins in the Krypt are marked from AA to ZZ, and they don't indicate what item they contain. It's not just characters, costumes and arenas you can unlock, but also artwork, photos and videos. Some coffins are empty (prompting the voice-over to laugh diabolically) while others contain koins of different types and denomination.

The funny thing is that while, on the hand, it's annoying when you get clunkers from the Krypt, on the other hand it feels really great once you finally get a character. Never mind that most fighting games start out with two costumes for the characters—it's still a sense of accomplishment.

I won't spoil the surprise by telling you which coffins contain which characters—besides, I unlocked all those characters without consulting FAQs or cheats, so earn them yourself, hehe. Keep in mind, however, that usually the most expensive coffins contain characters, but not always. You'll also bump into coffins that contain hints on what a letter combination stands for—all I can say is that it helps to remember that Raiden is an ex-god and Cyrax is a cyberninja. And oh, you need a whopping 6,500 sapphire koins just to unlock the butt-ugly oni Drahmin.

Another interesting feature of MKDA is the Konquest mode. While MKDA has the usual practice mode, what's great about Konquest is that you learn the different moves of your character while earning koins for successfully completing each mission. The missions start out as basic training, then move on to combos and quests.

In fact, you have to complete a whopping 218 missions. But along the way, you also learn interesting information, like the history of different martial arts and the unfolding MKDA storyline. It can be a fascinating glimpse into the Mortal Kombat universe and the dynamics between the different characters.

Remember that I said you could unlock nine regular characters? The Konquest mode is needed for you to unlock two more special characters—Blaze and Mokap. Okay, here's where I used an FAQ but the bad news is that you have to complete Konquest using all the characters to unlock either Mokap or Blaze. Now that's what I call forced replay value.

Now, what would Mortal Kombat be without the grisly fatalities? You know the drill: When prompted to "Finish him!" you have a window of opportunity for executing (pardon the pun) your fatality. Depending on your character, you'll either remove the heart and other vital organs from your opponent's living body, pull out his brain or belly flop him into a pool of blood. Some of the fatalities are really lame, though, plus don't you miss the pit where victims get impaled on spikes?

MKDA's endings are only text and graphics, unlike the DOA 3 or Tekken videos. Still, you do get to find out which character now houses the spirit of Liu Kang and who is the new incarnation of the Dragon King. MKDA's characters might not be as slick as other fighting games (where are the busty, drop-dead gorgeous babes?) but it does remain true to the spirit of Mortal Kombat while revamping it for the next generation. It has its own look and feel, and comparing it to DOA 3 might be like comparing Ultimate Fighting Championship to World Wrestling Entertainment.

Buy this game and finish it.

Novell makes . . .

From page B18

network administration and streamlined network access. The new release also offers improved storage administration and interoperability with Web services.

Novell plans to position NetWare 6.5 as an alternative to Microsoft's much-delayed Windows Server 2003. Apart from this, the product also has to contend with rival offerings from Unix vendors —such as Sun and HP—and Linux boxes.

The company plans to ship the product by mid-year.

Apart from enhanced networking features, NetWare 6.5 comes with a "virtual office" feature that allows easy remote connections to the network in accessing e-mail, network files or other business applications. New workgroup features empower users to set shared folders by themselves, and not have to call system administrators to complete this task.

NetWare 6.5 will also allow intelligent use of storage devices through storage area networks (SANs) through what Novell officials call visual applications. These applications consolidate data and files to make efficient use of enterprise storage. It will also allow efficient use of remote network connections, whereby replicas of files are dumped on a local cache server for branch users to access without having to establish links to the main server.

Java and Web services highlight this new release, which incorporates technology from Novell's acquisition of application server firm Silverstream in 2002. This new functionality allows developers to better integrate the package with multiple operating systems and disparate applications. It also strengthened support for open source programs.

It would still be a tall order for Novell to regain its lost ground. But NetWare 6.5 looks like a good start.

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DBM project winner declared; losers raise more questions

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

IT is now official: the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has finally awarded the P250-million government electronic procurement system (G-EPS) to local consortium ITBF Philippines, documents obtained by INQ7.net showed.

ITBF Philippines—a local consortium composed of East West Electronic Trade Center (EWETC) Ltd., a foreign-owned company based in the Philippines; Right Computers; ABC Consulting and Infomediary—won the controversial project over Ayala Systems Technology Inc. (ASTI).

Documents indicated that ITBF Philippines won the project, as it came out with the highest technical score based on the evaluation of submitted proposals to the DBM.

In a letter dated Jan. 15, the DBM said that ITBF Philippines won over ASTI by a narrow difference in technical score. Documents show that ITBF garnered a score of 963.41 points out of the total score of 1,000 points, while ASTI got 951.82.

The DBM has proceeded with negotiations with ITBF and post-qualification of the group's bid. However, in a letter sent to the DBM on Jan. 16—a day after the DBM announced ITBF as the winning bidder—ASTI raised

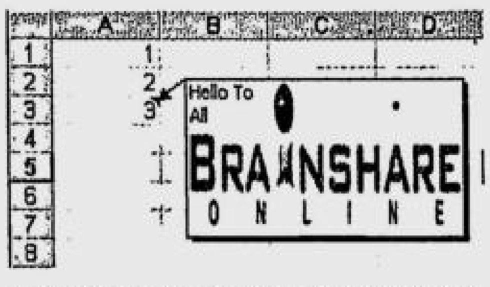
DBM/B16

Add pictures to comments in Excel

By Jerry Liao

ASIDE FROM HAVING text inside a cell comment, you can also add pictures to it. Here's how:

(1) Open your MS Excel workbook.
(2) Select a cell that contains a Comment.
(3) Right-click your mouse button. The shortcut menu will be displayed. Select "Show Comment."
(4) Move your mouse to the edge of the comment until the cursor changes into a four-tipped arrow then click the left mouse button.
(5) Right-click your mouse button, select Format Comment.
(6) Select the Color and Lines tab. Under "Fill," choose "Fill Effects."
(7) Select the "Picture" tab, then click on "Select Picture." Select a picture. Click "OK."



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Novell makes comeback bid with NetWare 6.5

By Gerry Plaza

WHO would forget the dominance Novell had in the local area network marketplace?

During the 1980s and the early 1990s, when organizations began thinking about linking their personal computers together to share and store files and run applications online, Novell came up with its "novel" idea—NetWare. NetWare had what its early competitors didn't have: A mind share of the whole networking technospeak; the "domain" it literally ruled, undisputed.

But things changed when Microsoft shifted its Windows strategy to the networking market and released an upgrade version of its desktop operating system, Windows 3.11, initially to link small workgroups and enterprise departments. But Novell's downward spiral became evident with the entry of Microsoft Windows NT, as shares for both NetWare and Unix boxes both tumbled.

With the entry of Windows 2000 and the emergence of Linux in the late 1990s, Novell was unable to offer a competitor product that could have invited some user interest. Alas, from a dominating 70-percent share in its prime, Novell took a nosedive to 17 percent by the turn of the millennium, according to research firm International Data Corp.

But, surprisingly, Novell weathered the storm and showed it can still pack a punch going into this year's networking wars. Not giving up the goat, Novell is still confident NetWare can complete a resurgence of sorts in the market where it once reigned.

Novell announced this week NetWare 6.5, code-named Nakoma, that features simplified

NOVELL/B17

Planet One gears up to offer pan-Asian voice, data service

SINGAPORE-BASED Planet One Pte. Ltd. is gearing up to become a major integrator of communications networks and systems for enterprises in the Asia-Pacific region with its acquisition of Tong Guang-Nortel Limited Liability Co. (TGNT), the manufacturer and distributor of Nortel Networks Meridian telephony products in China.

Planet One acquired TGNT on Dec. 31, 2002 through its subsidiary 3D TGNT Holdings Pte. Ltd.

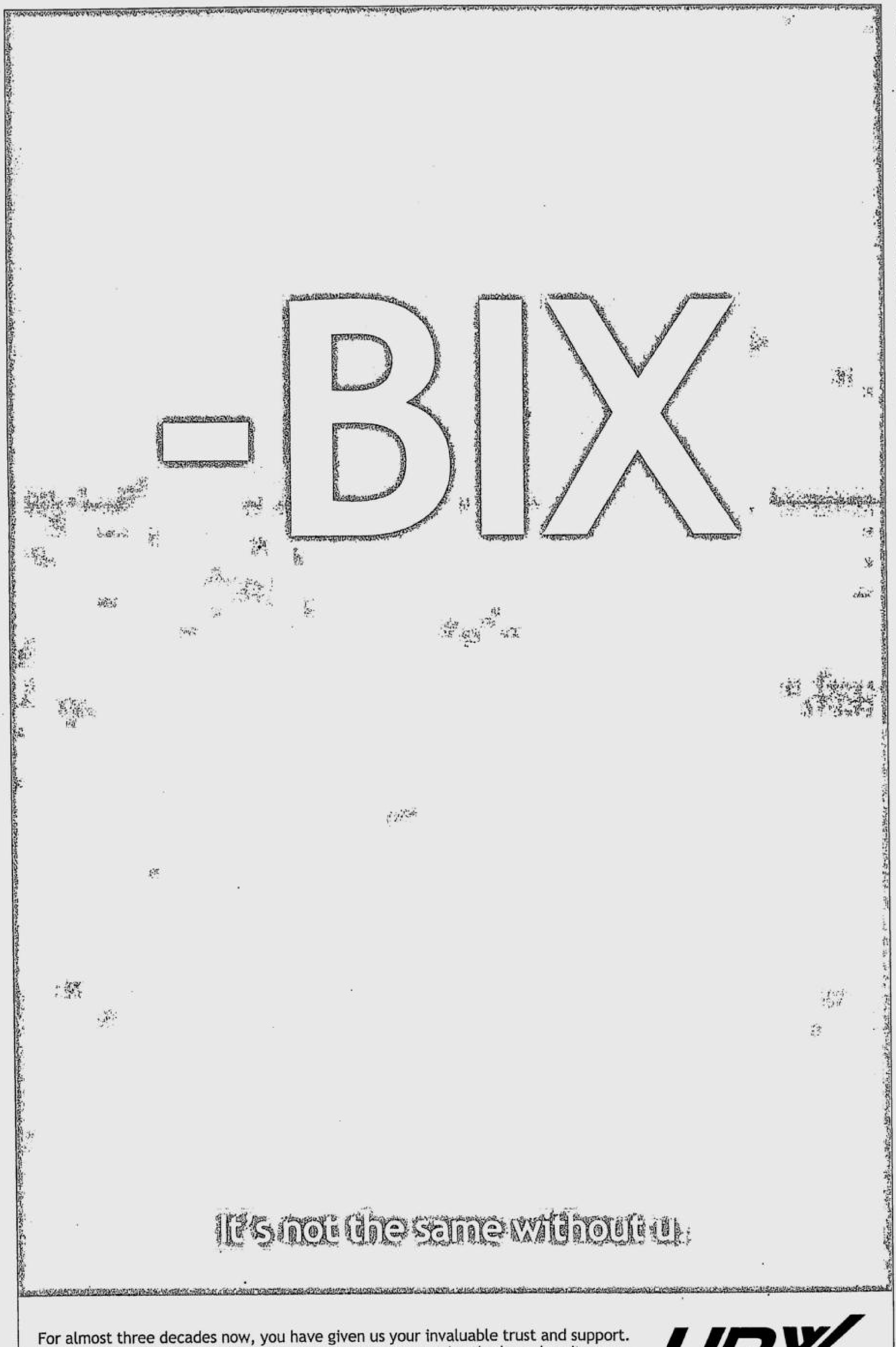
Planet One CEO Yoon Mun Chiew said 3D TGNT would form part of the existing 3D Networks business, the arm of Planet One that focuses on the integration of communications networks and systems for enterprises.

"3D TGNT will give the group a quality foothold in the vast Chinese market, where we can further develop our presence in the systems integration field," he added.

Planet One's long-term objective will be to develop the company as a multi-skilled and multi-product enterprise to support the full suite of Nortel Networks Enterprise solutions. 3D TGNT will also be strengthened with a two-pronged strategy, involving the establishment of a direct presence in important major upcoming markets and the development of a comprehensive reseller network to cover the rest of the China market.

Yoon said that through strategic and ongoing investment in IT companies that add synergies, Planet One was developing a regional technology services network equipped to support global and regional enterprises in their information and communications needs.

"Planet One is now one step closer to making its 3D Networks operation a true regional pan-Asian player as a leading systems integrator with expertise in converged voice and data networks, especially concentrating on Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technology," said 3D TGNT CEO Charles Lim. "VoIP technology, as an anchor application running over a unified communications network, is fast becoming a commercially viable technology that enterprises will adopt in the near future to minimize the costs of their voice communications."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KEEP RP NEUTRAL

How to keep growth despite Iraq war

By Dennis M. Arroyo
Contributor

GOVERNMENT is rejoicing over the economy's brisk 4.6-percent growth in gross domestic product last year, the fastest rate since 1997. At the same time, Malacañang warns that hard times lie ahead, due to the likely war of the United States on Iraq.

The following are some ideas on how to maintain growth even in the face of war.

- **Keep the Philippines neutral.**

America will win the war, but she won't likely win the peace. It's quite possible that the war will ignite acts of terrorism across the world. Crude bombs explode from New York to London, blasting business confidence, inviting a global slump.

Will the bombs detonate in Manila? It depends on the government. Allow the Philippines to be a transit point for US troops, and al-Qaida operatives will activate their local allies. Filipinos have no quarrel with the people of Iraq, and that relationship must be maintained. Waging peace is good for the economy.

- **To cut the deficit, fix revenue, don't slash expenditure.**

The budget deficit is expected to breach P223 billion, way above the original target of P130 billion. The deficit will swell further as pre-election spending kicks in.

The problem is not government overspending—the Philippines does not have a relatively large public sector. It is also vital to maintain pro-poor programs when the economy is threatened. The problem is the lack of revenue due to massive tax evasion.

The latter, in turn, is due to corruption in the Bureau of Internal Revenue: Shady agents make deals with firms and families to trim their tax payments.

There are pending bills to overhaul the BIR, to make it a private sector body. These must be passed.

- **Let services, telecom and trade in particular, lead the way.**

In 2002, the main driver of growth was services, at 5.4 percent. The performance of services is good news because the Philippines is now primarily a service economy, like Malaysia and Thailand. Services get the biggest chunk of output: 45 percent, compared to a 20-percent share for agriculture and 35 percent for industry.

Further, the service sector employs about half of the workforce, 47 percent, compared to 37 percent for agriculture and 16 percent for industry.

What in turn is boosting growth in services? It is the telecommunications sector. The growth rates for the "transport, communications and storage" category was 8.9 percent in 2002. Government should also boost the trade sector, for it makes up the biggest chunk of services—besides posting a brisk 5.7-percent growth last year.

Policies that promote competition in telecom and trade should be put in place.

- **Control inflation to maintain consumer spending.**

While government spending and investment fell in 2002, personal consumption held steady, posting growth of 3.9 percent. This was likely due to the low inflation last year.

However, higher prices are expected in 2003. Wars are inflationary due to economic uncertainty, a stronger dollar, and some pressure on oil prices. Political parties will also maneuver for elections next year.

Fuel prices are rising, and so are those of some food commodities. The Bangko Sentral governor says that inflation will likely exceed the state's lower end forecast of 4.5 percent. Its expected response is to raise interest rates. However, government can also dampen inflation by allowing more imports of cheap rice.

- **Construction, cash in on low-cost housing.**

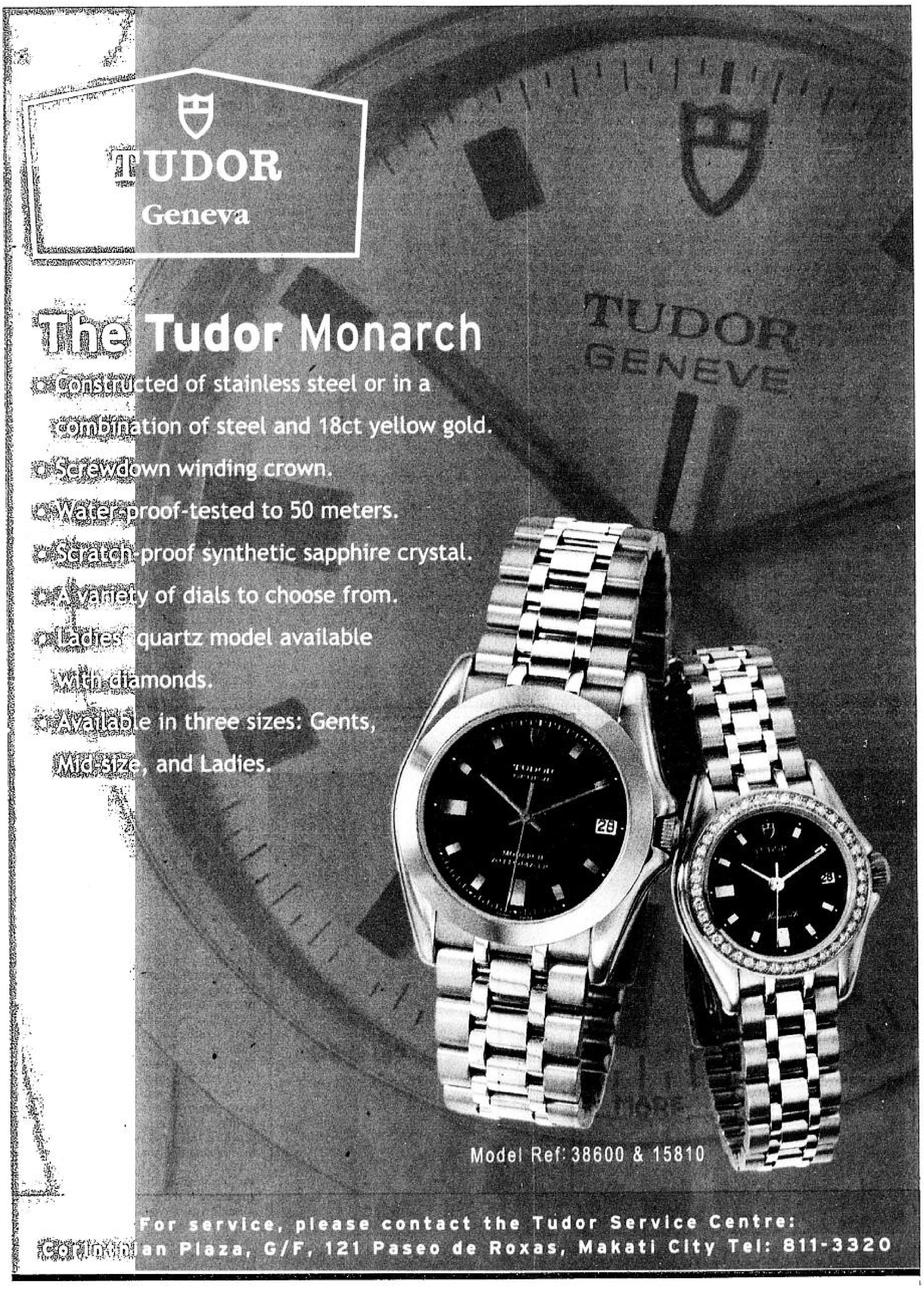
Construction involves many industries so it is a vital tool for generating employment. The good news is that construction has stopped slipping. Its growth rate was negative, at -3.0 percent in 2001, but it bounced back with 2.4 percent growth in 2002.

Note that it was public sector construction that dragged the average with a negative growth rate—1.8 percent, in contrast to a private sector rate of 6.6 percent.

However, the state has committed to push social housing, so the housing sector should pick up more steam in 2003. President Macapagal-Arroyo has said: "We shall jump-start housing by improving access to housing finance."

Smart investors should take advantage of this policy and get into low-cost housing.

HOW/ C2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-North Mall, Alabang Town Center
-G/F, Ali Mall
-G/F, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center
-G/F, Harrison Plaza

WASHINGTON WATCHES & JEWELRIES
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- Marc Ablaza, *Baguio*

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NSO hotline serves millionth customer

By Doris C. Dumlao

NOELA Salas, a 38-year-old sales supervisor based in Ormoc City, Leyte, urgently needed to get the birth certificate of her mom as a requirement for medical insurance. Obviously, it would have been impractical for her to fly to Manila and line up at the National Statistics Office counters just to get hold of the legal document.

Fortunately, an officemate referred her to Pilipinas Teleserv Inc. to place the request with the NSO last November. All she did was to dial the toll-free hotline 737-1111 to apply for the birth certificate. Within three days, the document was delivered to her in Ormoc through courier Aboitiz Express.

Salas turned out to be the one millionth citizen customer served since Pilipinas Teleserv launched the NSO Helpline project in June 12, 2000. She still had to fly to Manila recently—not for anything else but to grace Pilipinas Teleserv's celebration of this milestone in its business and while at it, take a few days off for free.

"It's really a big help especially for those who can't come here (to Manila)," Salas says in Filipino.

According to Pilipinas Teleserv director for marketing and quality assurance Raffy David, the venture now takes about 20-25 percent share of daily applications filed with the NSO. This translates to about 2,000 requests for legal documents per day out of about 6,000 daily calls handled by the call center.

Although the service is perceived to be most useful to people based outside Metro Manila like Salas, he says majority of the customers still consists of those within the metropolis. Nevertheless, province-based customers account for a sizeable 45-percent share of Pilipinas Teleserv's business.

"The benefit to people outside the provinces is most obvious, but people within Metro Manila are busy and heavy traffic makes it difficult for them to travel to NSO to get the certificates," David says.

For Pilipinas Teleserv, hitting the 1-million mark was symbolic, a radical shift from the ways of the past that meant long and time-consuming queues. It proved that the business is here to stay, David says, noting that the 1-million mark was, in fact, hit much earlier than originally expected.

The big volume of orders—even in the absence of costly nationwide advertising—was not unexpected. Every one needs a certificate of live birth to apply for a passport, to enroll in school, to get a driver's or marriage license.

Pilipinas Teleserv also processes other legal documents from the NSO, like marriage certificate, certificate of no marriage and death certificate.

These papers are some of the most basic means of identification and authentication for personal background information, facilitating a host of private and government prerequisites for hiring, releasing of other documents or engaging in any binding agreement.

As a start-up company which was put up at almost the same time that the NSO Helpline project was launched, Pilipinas Teleserv had to rely more on referrals or word of mouth. If the company would have to shell out funds for a nationwide advertising, David says it would inevitably have to pass on the cost to consumers. Instead, the company opted to keep margins low and instead rake it in by the volumes.

David adds that the main thrust of this venture between a government agency like NSO and a private enterprise like Teleserv is to raise the level of civil services at par with local and multinational public service companies. The venture also aims to provide the benchmark for competence and speed in the procurement of public and legal documents.

As the government seeks to improve its basic services, the advent of new telecommunication technology and delivery services has paved the way for private companies to fill in the gaps in its operations, he says.

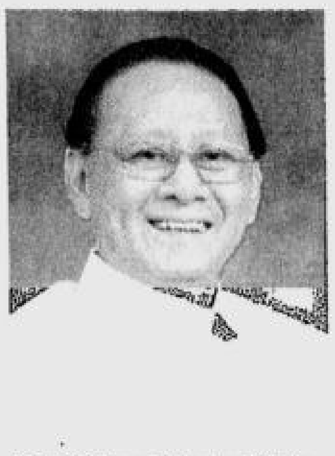
After only about two years, Pilipinas Teleserv has thus grown into a teleservices solutions firm with 170 employees and 120 call center seats.

Rural bank withstands 50 years of economic ups and downs

Photos by Mandy Navasero

LUIS Gaerlan Jr., original incorporator.

IRB chair and president Oscar F. Tirona.



IRB COO and director Mario M. Sayoc.

ALTHOUGH its name has remained the same, the Imus Rural Bank (IRB) has changed.

The former agricultural town just at the outskirts of Manila is definitely no longer rural just as IRB's clientele is no longer predominantly farmers and agricultural workers. But IRB, which will mark its 50th year on Feb. 27, remains very much a part of, as well as one of the engines that contribute to the sustained growth and development of the town of Imus in Cavite.

Bank president and board chair Oscar F. Tirona, an engineer by profession, said IRB has withstood competition from bigger so-called universal banks because of its standing with the community and the credibility it enjoys.

Like every community's favorite *sari-sari* store, the bank, the second to be set up in the country after the Rodriguez-owned firm in Rizal province, continues to be service-oriented and deals with its clients on a personal level. Despite the presence of 38 banks in Imus, including thrift banks, IRB remains the pick of local clients. Tirona said even people from other parts of Cavite as well as other provinces have been going IRB for their financing requirements.

He attributed this to the bank's solid management and good strategy. Moreover, "our people have credibility."

Tirona added, "We do not grant big loans, only small amounts, but (processing them) does not take long." The service, he explained, was very personalized. "There is less red tape as we deal with (each client) personally)." The close relationship and long association between bank and clients account for the fact that IRB remains one of the few, may even be the only one, that still grants character loans up to now—transactions based mainly on a person's perceived trustworthiness and credibility. Tirona said the maximum amount for those loans was P100,000.

But the bank also has more tangible things to offer clients aside from efficient service and reliability. "We give better rates than commercial banks because our overhead is lower," Tirona said. Even people with checks to cash, particularly those involving modest amounts, would be better off going to IRB than any of the big banks.

"Whatever is the face value of the check is paid. We don't even collect service charges," Tirona pointed out.

Although IRB, by virtue of rural bank regulations could not go into real estate and property development, Tirona said the institution was stable and solid because it was conservative and prudent in handling its resources. In fact, during the financial crisis, it was the only bank in Cavite that remained managed to sustain its operations without major upheavals. "Our reserves remain intact and are even higher than the minimum required (by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas)," Tirona pointed out.

IRB IMUS RURAL BANK

(From left): **ALEJANDRO B. Saulog Jr., Zafiro V. Benedicto, Monina T. Talens, chair and director Oscar F. Tirona, lawyer Jose P. Crisostomo Jr., Sylvia T. Rojas, Mario M. Sayoc and Dr. Joselito C. Jamir.**

The bank was set up 50 years ago by men who traced their roots to Imus and were of proven integrity, competence and stature. They included Dr. Eugenio Villanueva Sr., Luis Gaerlan Jr., Dr. Jose Crisostomo Sr., lawyer Severino Dominguez Sr., Narciso Viña, Ciriaco Sayoc and Zosimo Topacio Sr.

The bank's board is now composed of descendants of the first shareholders, including Tirona himself. Starting with a paid-up capital of P15,000 half a century ago, IRB has now an authorized capitalization of P100 million.

Mario Sayoc, IRB chief operating officer, said the bank enjoyed the respect of even its bigger competitors in the town that it had become the "godfather of other banks" in Imus. The other banks would go to IRB for certain requirements, such as urgently needed bridge financing, which the rural bank managed to process in just a week.

Similarly, Sayoc said, people having problems with the bigger banks would move their business to IRB, where procedures were shortened significantly.

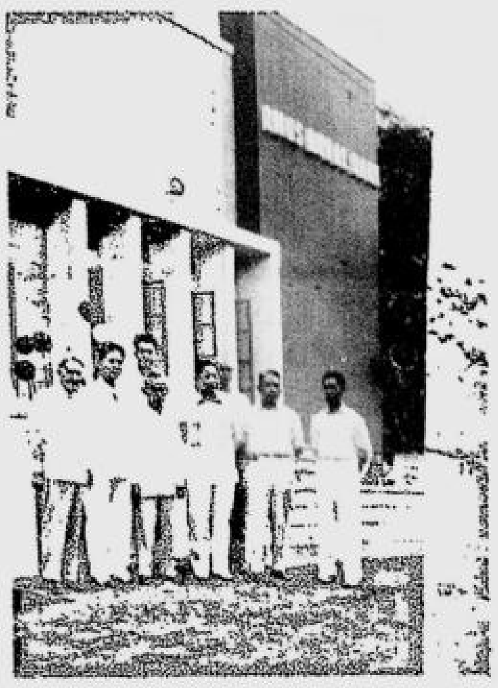
Dr. Joselito Jamir, an independent bank director, said IRB was the training ground for many employees and executives now working in other banks in Imus and the rest of the province. IRB "graduates" had even moved on to Metro Manila's financial institutions.

With over 200 subdivisions in Imus, IRB's agri-business clientele now accounts for only 25 percent of the total.

But Tirona is confident IRB's place in Imus remains secure. "IRB has (carved) its own niche in the community. It has good rapport (not just with its clients but with) other banks (as well)," he said.

The bank, he said, had credibility and trustworthiness and was valued by the community and other clients. Its untarnished reputation and clean banking record (Tirona said IRB had never been cited by the BSP for any violations), which enabled it to withstand the entry of bigger banks, would see it through in the years ahead, the bank president believed.

Consistently in the list of the country's top 12 rural banks, Tirona pointed out that half a century of existence had not made IRB set in its ways. "We were among the first to introduce a computerized system and one of the few to employ programmers to improve service. Our systems and procedures are dynamic (and we are willing) to invest on services and tools that will improve operations."



ORIGINAL members of the board in 1953. Zosimo Topacio, lawyer Severino Dominguez, Dr. Jose Crisostomo, Ciriaco Sayoc, guests, Dr. Eugenio Villanueva and Luis Gaerlan Jr.

Tirona said the bank, which has a staff of 36, believes in maximizing productivity.

Instead of replacing people who leave, new management tools are introduced and the salary saved is converted into added benefits for those who remained, the bank executive said.

Tirona said IRB preferred to remain a rural bank. He noted that there was already too much competition among bigger banks while rural banking was simpler and could be profitable if done efficiently.

Moreover, he said, IRB wanted to retain its present category "because we are able to reach out to people (and provide the kind of service big banks are unable to extend). Our people are known personally to clients unlike staff members of big banks who are strangers to them."

How to keep growth despite Iraq war

From page C1

- **Modernize agriculture and push agribusiness.**

Agriculture is basic for food security. Despite the El Niño drought, agriculture posted a 3.5-percent growth in 2002. The growth rate was actually 2.4 percent in the second quarter and even negative (0.1 percent) in the third. Then in the 4th quarter—bang—agricultural growth grew at a fast 6.1-percent clip.

Agriculture should recover further in 2003, as the El Niño will be over after the first quarter of this year. That would in turn boost industry, as the food manufacturing sector makes up 36 percent of total manufacturing.

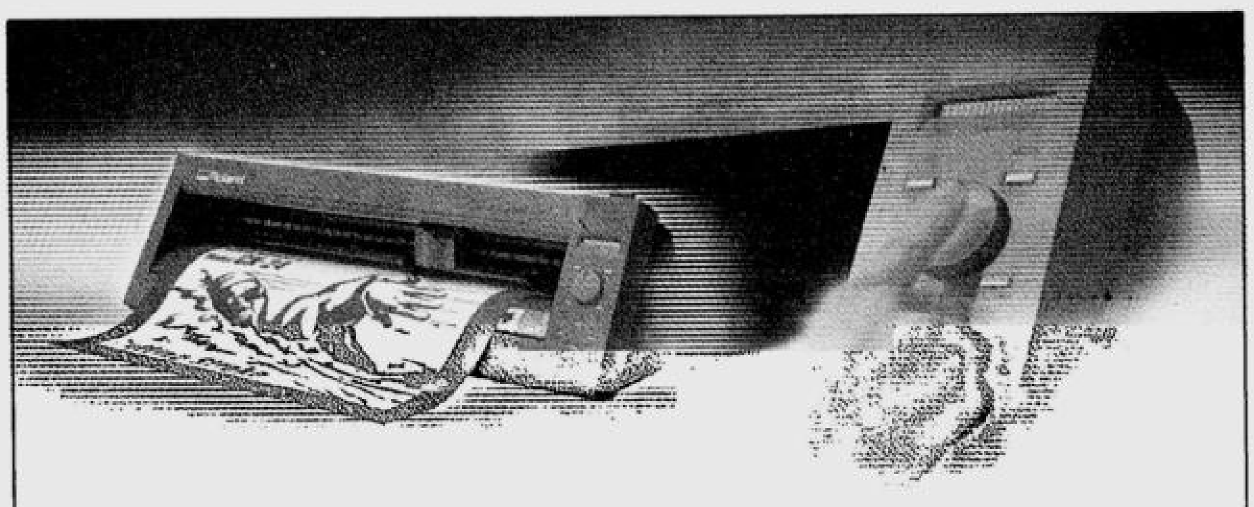
Agriculture should grow faster with more investments in irrigation and rural roads. Farmers will also earn much more if they plant cash crops along with rice.

- **Diversify export markets.**

The export sector contracted in 2001, with a negative growth rate of -5.2 percent. In 2002 it expanded by 3.3 percent. America's economy is already cooling. If terrorist acts multiply there, the economy may really sag, clamping the main export market of the Philippines.

Fortunately, Filipino exporters are learning to diversify their markets. Because of the slump in the United States and Japan, local companies turned to the rest of Asia. Exports for Asian countries other than Japan blew up by more than 30 percent.

These moves should keep the economy on a fast clip, unnerved by the blasts of war. *Comments to darroyo@philonline.com*



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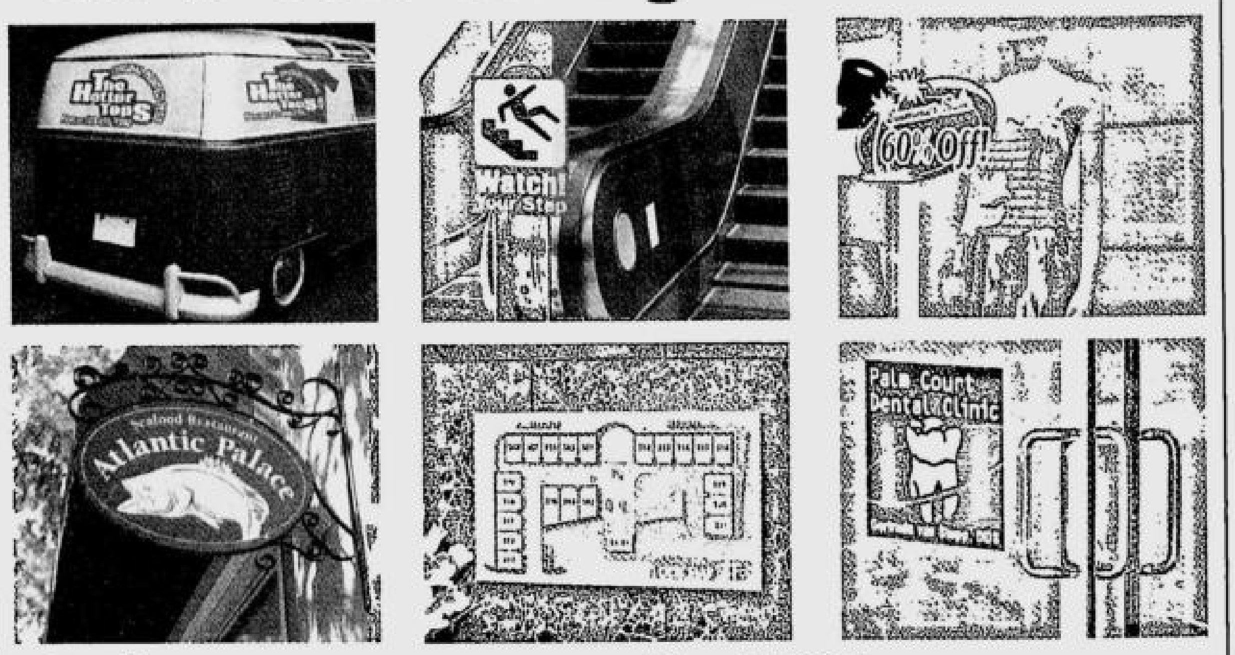

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MOVEMENTS

PLIA installs new board

THE PHILIPPINE Life Insurance Association Inc. (PLIA) inducted its newly elected 2003 board of directors, officers and chairpersons of standing committees. To assume the post as PLIA president is Jose L. Cuisia Jr., the incumbent president and CEO of Philamlife, as well as chair of the more than 30 subsidiaries and affiliates of the Philam Group of Companies. he was the former Central Bank Gover-

MOVE/ C4

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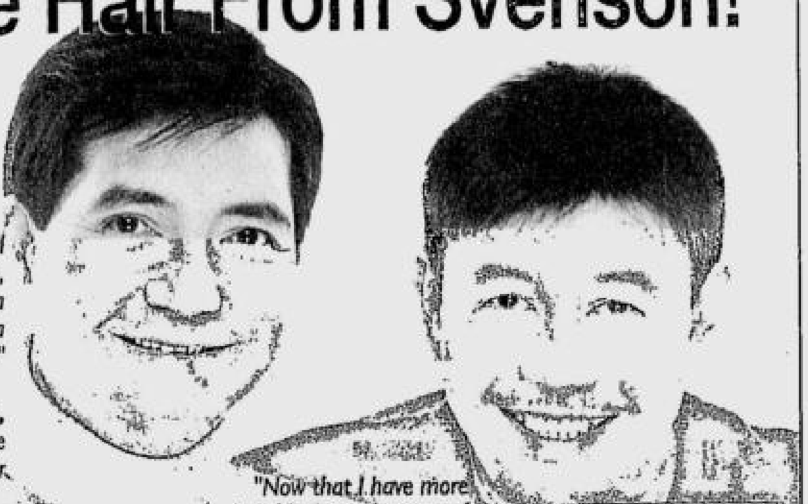

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- Gil Beltran, Insurance Underwriter

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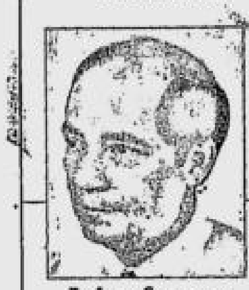
- Noli de Leon, Businessman



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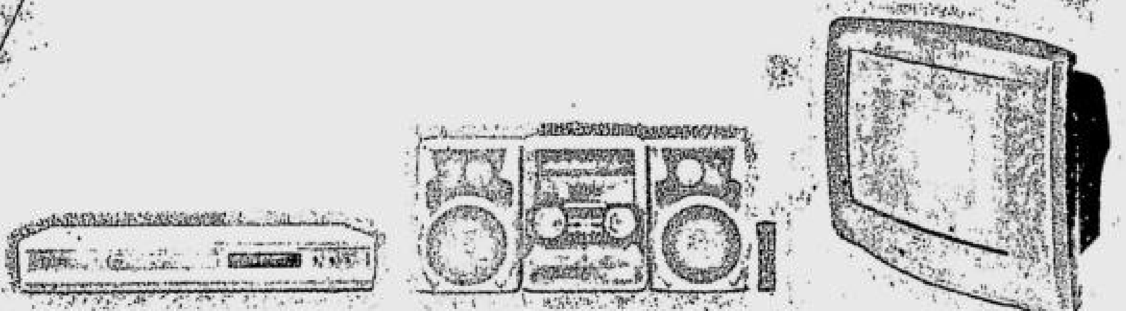

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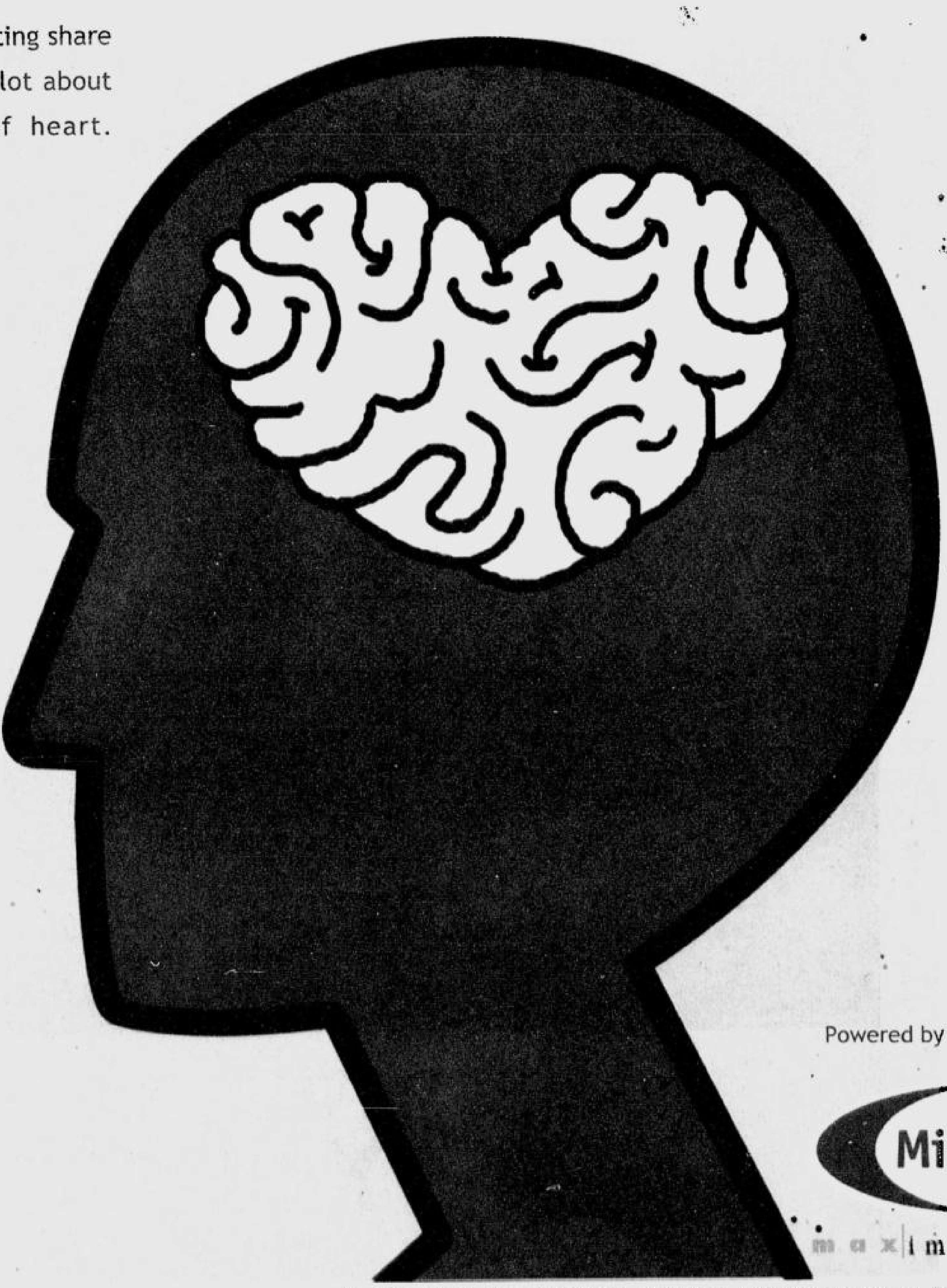

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Wall St pundit, analyst jobs lose their allure

NEW YORK—Being a Wall Street strategist just isn't that much fun anymore.

During the bull market, some stock pundits achieved rock-star status as they steered millions of American investors to apparent riches with rosy forecasts. Their every pronouncement was the subject of intense media interest.

With a loss of public esteem after three years of successive market declines that most strategists failed to predict, however, it's beginning to sound like any other job.

On Monday, Carlos Asilis left J.P. Morgan Chase after only seven months as the No. 2 US bank's chief equities strategist. Asilis is returning to a Madrid-based hedge fund where he briefly worked before joining J.P. Morgan in 1999. Asilis couldn't be reached for comment.

"It finally happened," said Steve Galbraith, Morgan Stanley's new chief US investment strategist, in a July 29 research note. "Traveling on a plane a few weeks back someone asked me what I did for a living. I winced, gagged and muttered something unintelligible."

That's from a strategist who had a very good year.

Galbraith took over as Morgan Stanley's top US stocks guru in December 2001, and a year later, he was voted the No. 1 portfolio strategist for 2002 in an Institutional Investor magazine survey.

Woes

Last fall, several highly regarded strategists were forced to leave their posts, including Credit Suisse First Boston's Tom Galvin and Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc.'s Jeffrey Applegate and its co-chief US economist, Stephen Slifer. They had lost clout because they had been too bullish and because costly research departments are perceived as less useful.

"I was going to retire probably in a couple of years, but given what's been happening on the Street and problems in the market, it happened a couple of years earlier than I thought," said Slifer at the time.

With the Standard & Poor's 500 index trading at not much more than half its 2000 peak, prominent themes nowadays for strategists are job insecurity, diminished paychecks, a skeptical press, explaining forecasts that went wrong, probes and even clients loathe to admit they listen to their advice.

"Fortunately, my mom has not yet chipped in with her thoughts on the market, though that may just be because she is still wondering what went wrong in the parenting process that somehow led me to Wall Street," Galbraith said in his note.

Among Galbraith's trying moments in 2002: fending off criticism from the AFL-CIO after he advised investors to avoid heavily unionized industries and explaining an off-base market forecast.

"We went into the year with a 12-month target for the S&P of around 1,200 (up 5 percent). Looks like we are only going to miss by about 25 percent or so -- ugh. (Memo to clients: Galbraith is next to useless on near-term market forecasts)," he wrote in a Sept. 23 note.

Salt in the wound is that another top strategist, Merrill Lynch's Richard Bernstein, regularly trumpets the findings of his "Sell-Side Indicator"— a device based on the proposition that his pundit peers don't know what they're talking about.

"The Sell Side Indicator is our most reliable market-timing barometer," Bernstein wrote in a research note on Monday, as he has before. "We have found, when adding a little math, that Wall Street's consensus equity allocation has historically been a reliable contrary indicator,"

Not just strategists

Wall Street analysts, who focus on individual companies, are sharing the pain felt by strategists, who take the big view.

In recent months, three top analysts have left Merrill.

They include bank and brokerage specialist Judah Kraushaar and technology analyst Chris Shilakes, who left last month. Both analysts are taking a sabbatical before they figure out their next move.

John Bensche, a wireless analyst, left Lehman last month, saying he was retiring. Hans Mosesmann and John McPeake, who covered parts of the tech industry for Prudential Securities, recently left that firm.

"I'd be surprised if I didn't see a couple of people leave," said one top research director, speaking on condition of anonymity. "It happens in every bear market."

Reuters

Movements

From page C3

nor and SSS Administrator before joining Philamlife in 1993.

In addition to Cuisia, the other newly elected PLIA directors and officers are: vice president— Jaime C. Fernandez of Beneficial-PNB Life; secretary—Mariane H. Crisol of New York Life; and treasurer—Armando C. Trinidad of Fortune Life.

The remaining directors include: Jose C. Lee of Philippine International Life, Eulogio A. Mendoza of ATR Professional, Victor P. Quisumbing of Philippine AXA Life, Rafael G. Uyguanco of Philippine Prudential Life, and Akira Yazawa of Sony Life.

Century appoints new GM

WITH the departure of Ana Hotels, effective Jan. 1, 2003, the Maranaw Hotels and Resorts Corp., the managing and owning company of the Century Park has appointed British national Paul Russel Gill to be its new general manager.

Gill was the executive assistant manager of the Charterhouse Hotel-Hong Kong. He has a wide experience in the hospitality business. His different assignments have brought him around Europe and Asia. Gill started his career in the hotel industry with the London Hilton in September 1983 as Demi Chef de Partie.

In 1984, he was back in London as Senior Chef de partie for the Grosvenor House Hotel. In 1985 he moved to Meridien Piccadilly, London as its Sous Chef. From 1987 to 1989 he was in another hotel in England, this time it was the Inigo Jones, Covenant Garden where he became Executive Sous Chef.

New Intercon execs

THE MANAGEMENT of InterContinental Manila proudly announces the appointment of Carmela Bocanegra and Cyrille Soenen as director of sales and marketing and executive Chef, respectively.

Bocanegra brings with her 15 solid years of experience in the hotel and tourism industry. As Director of Sales and Marketing, she will oversee all aspects pertaining to sales and promotions of the hotel's various room packages as well as food & beverage offers.

Soenen, on the other hand, joined the hotel in 2000 as the head chef of the acclaimed fine dining restaurant Prince Albert Rotisserie.

Before coming to the Philippines, he worked with 3-star Michelin Chef and "Meilleur Ouvrier de France" awardee, Christian Lesquer, for seven years—first at the Ritz Hotel in Paris and then at Restaurant Opera and Café de la Paix of Le Grand InterContinental Paris.

Pan Pacific has new officers

PAN Pacific Manila has bared new appointees. Joining the team are Jocelyn Barcelona, Roselyn Sabalburo and Jay Mascariñas.

Jodelyn Barcelona is the new director of people innovation. Her expertise includes training & development, recruitment, organizational development, employee relations, compensation & benefits administration.

Roselyn Sabalburo is back with Pan Pacific Manila as Room Sales Manager handling major corporate accounts. Her 10 years in the hospitality industry have played a major role in the increase of revenue and network that would prove beneficial for any company.

Jay Mascariñas is loyal in the field of hospitality industry. He has handled top corporate rooms and banquet requirements for the past eight years. He is now assigned as banquet sales manager driving the team with optimism and a clear vision in spite of the challenging market.

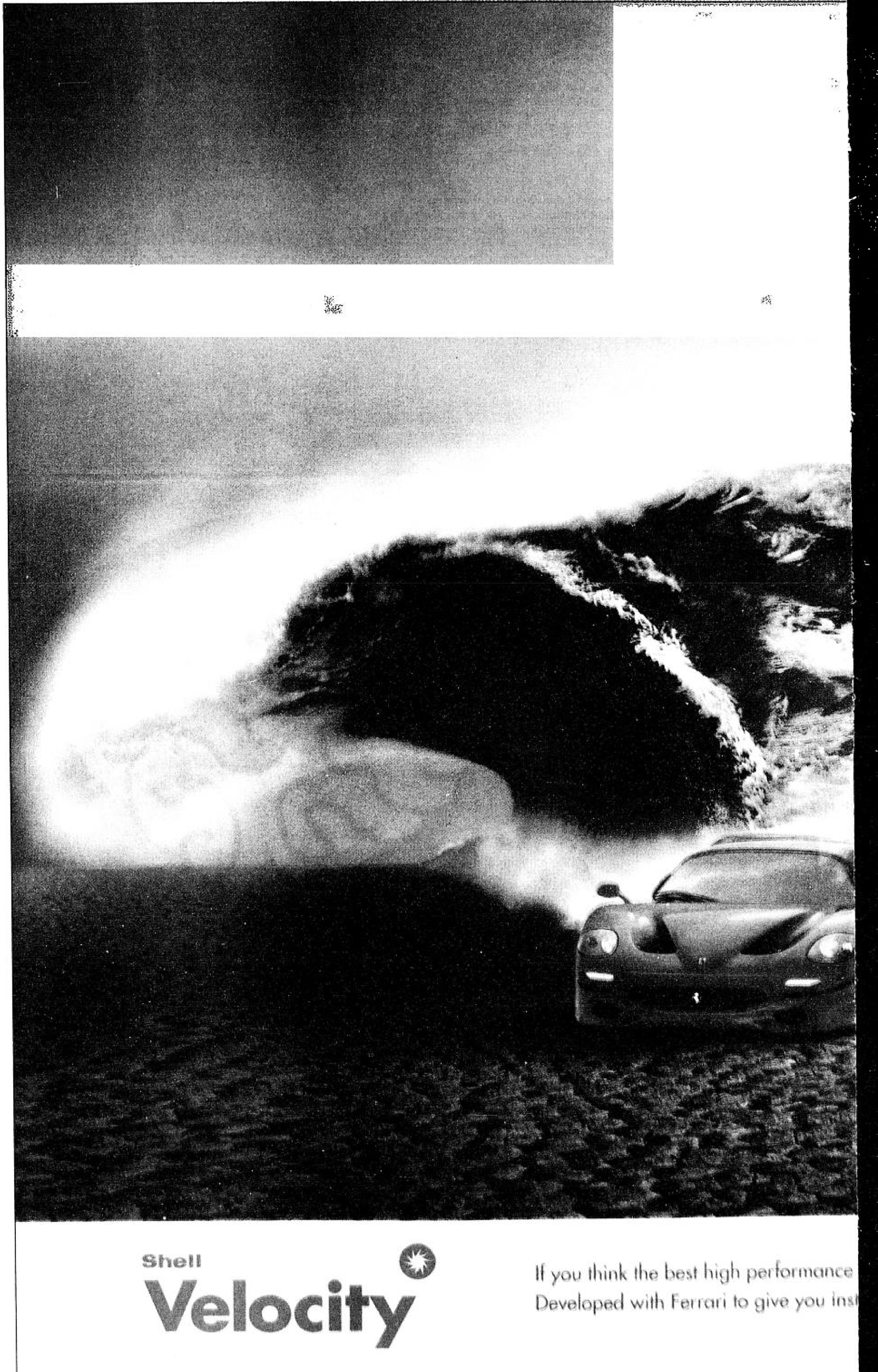
SGV director passes exam

SGV & Co. director Carmelita C. Daduya makes history by being the first Filipino to pass the Certification in Control Self Assessment examination of the Institute of Internal Auditors.

Passing the exam makes Daduya a certified control self assessor aside from being a Certified Internal Auditor.

A CCSA designation enhances an auditor's credibility among clients and senior management as it confirms the practitioner's knowledge of different areas such as risk and control models, as well as CSA principles and techniques.

Daduya is a director in business risk services of SGV & Co. She helps clients understand and manage their business risks by conducting process performance and control analysis, internal audit services, risk-based audit training, quality assurance reviews and by providing manpower assistance to clients.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The right fit between pedagogy and technology

THE PHILIPPINE Normal University, in partnership with IBM-Philippines and EduQuest Inc., is launching a new graduate program that aims to deepen educators' competencies in designing and implementing an ICT-enabled school environment.

The Master in Educational Technology (MET) program is PNU's response to the increasing demand for teachers who possess ICT-related skills to effectively incorporate technology into the present teaching practices.

With the MET course, the state university believes that Filipino educators aware of the continuing need for professional development can now keep up with the dynamic changes brought about by ICT, and use these skills to become globally competitive master educators.

The MET curriculum integrates the appropriate use of technology in all aspects of educational processes, from classroom practices to the development of students' competencies through collaboration to various educational resources beyond the walls of the classroom.

The program allows teachers to develop competencies in teaching with the use of technology that will expose students to problem and inquiry-based software, and multimedia resources, simulation and educational games, web-based courses, and automated assessment tools.

The MET provides teachers with the appropriate pedagogical framework, training and guidance on the use of various technologies that teachers can use to improve classroom management, interaction, and skills assessment.

PNU's approach is founded on the proven education principle of balancing theory with practice. Students of MET will have rich practicum experience by immersing themselves in the actual technology applications in various schools.

AMA tops SWS survey anew

A RECENT poll conducted by the Social Weather Station (SWS) revealed that AMA Computer University is still "the most recommended computer school" in the Philippines, garnering 47-percent favorable votes from respondents.

AMA Computer University, reputed to be the first and largest IT University in Asia, has consistently top-billed the survey three years in a row now. Its closest competitor garnered 17 percent of the votes. AMA also bested some of the country's leading schools.

Demographics reveal that the top four reasons cited by the survey respondents for ranking AMA number one include awareness and prevalence in the academe (36 percent), high standard of teaching and advanced curricula (30 percent), complete and modern facilities and high-end technology (22 percent) and greater employability among its successful graduates (17 percent).

Other reasons cited include affordable tuition, global affiliation with IT industry giants like Microsoft, widest national reach with its many branches, and computer specialization and IT focus.

Respondents belonging to the NCR were shown to have favored AMA the most with 83 percent of the votes. While 77 percent from class ABC made the same recommendation.

The survey likewise revealed that there has been a dramatic increase in the number of students who would like to enroll in computer schools in the NCR, especially among the ABC socio-economic class. This is good news for the information and communications technology (ICT) industry as its demands for globally competitive manpower increase every year.

4 professionals receive 2002 Tofil award

THE PHILIPPINE Jaycee Senate (PJS) and Insular Life honored four outstanding professionals with the outstanding Filipino (Tofil) award in ceremonies held recently at the Insular Life Corporate Centre Auditorium in Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

The awardees were Quezon City Mayor Feliciano R. Belmonte Jr. for public service, Dr. David M. Consunji for construction industry, Dr. Emil Q. Javier for science and technology, and Dr. George SK Ty for banking.

1998 Tofil awardee for business and chair emeritus of the Phinma Group Ambassador Ramon V. del Rosario Sr., was the guest speaker of the event, which was graced by family, friends and associates of the awardees as well as distinguished personalities from government, business, civil society, and the academe.

Insular Life chair and president Vicente R. Ayllón extolled the four awardees, who, by virtue of their achievements and examples, have clearly shown that "life becomes more productive and meaningful if it is lived in service of others."

Belmonte has dedicated most of his life to serving the needs of the people through sound fiscal management, good governance, providing solutions to socio-economic and political problems as CEO of large government corporations, then as Representative, and now as city mayor.

Consunji founded DM Consunji Inc., one of the largest construction companies in the country. He is known as the "infrastructure philosopher" and "grandfather of physical planning, and whose structures have become landmarks and symbols of the country's progress.

Javier, on the other hand, has dedicated his life to promoting the advances of science and technology, particularly in agriculture, in order to help alleviate poverty in the Philippines and in other third world countries.

Ty, a banker, enterprise-builder, and philanthropist, always regarded his success as a greater means to share his resources with the less privileged in the society. To further concretize this vision, he established a foundation that has, to date, benefited not only the underprivileged, but also various sectors of the society.

For 15 years now, the Tofil awards has been recognizing Filipino men and women in diverse fields, whose extraordinary accomplishments have inspired hope among Filipinos and have contributed to nation-building.

HBO receives 7 Golden Globe awards

HBO WON seven awards, the most in HBO history, in the 60th annual Golden Globe Awards in Los Angeles. HBO received a record 26 nominations, the most in HBO history and twice as many as any other television network when the nominations were announced in Dec. 20.

Viewers in Asia can look forward to the new season of "Six Feet Under" and "Sex and the City" in 2003. HBO is currently showing a special "Sex and the City" trilogy with three episodes back to back, every Tuesday, starting at 10 p.m.

HBO's Golden Globe awards this year include:

- Best mini-series or motion picture made for television
  "The Gathering Storm"
- Best television series – musical or comedy
  "Curb Your Enthusiasm"
- Best performance by an actress in a mini-series or a motion picture made for television
  Uma Thurman, "Hysterical Blindness"
- Best performance by an actress in a television series – drama
  Edie Falco, "The Sopranos"
- Best performance by an actor in a mini-series or a motion picture made for television
  Albert Finney, "The Gathering Storm"
- Best performance by an actress in a supporting role in a series, mini-series or motion picture made for television
  Kim Cattrall, "Sex and the City"
- Best performance by an actor in a supporting role in a series, mini-series or motion picture made for television
  Donald Sutherland, "Path to War"

Singapore-based HBO Asia is able to bring the best of Hollywood to Asia first because of its exclusive licensing deals with the five major Hollywood Studios—Warner Bros., Columbia/TriStar, Paramount Pictures, Universal Studios and DreamWorks. In addition to the proprietary and award-winning HBO Original programs that are produced exclusively for HBO viewers, HBO works with a large number of major independent production companies to secure exclusive rights to a host of quality movies. HBO Asia is a joint venture of media giants Time Warner Entertainment, Paramount Films, Sony Pictures Entertainment and Universal Studios.

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People, Events & Products

Aries Espinosa, Editor

aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Café Nescafé opens at Alabang Town Center

CAFÉ Nescafé now offers to consumers in southern Metro Manila fresh and highly enjoyable experiences with Nescafé, the world's leading coffee brand, in a setting away from home with the recent opening of its branch at the Alabang Town Center in Alabang Muntinlupa.

With its signature Coffees of the World, Café Nescafé brings distinct variations of a beloved beverage from the countries that have significantly contributed to the growth and divergence of Nescafé. The unique preparation of each concoction provides patrons with a pleasing range of coffee choices.

The Coffees of the World selections are: After Eight Coffee of the United Kingdom, Coffee Amaretto of Italy, Café Viennese of Austria, Belgian Orange Coffee of Belgium, Kahlua Coffee of Mexico, Hazelnut Truffle Latte of Switzerland, Black Forest Mocha of Germany, Dutch Coffee Special of Holland, Café Brazilia of Brazil, Raspberry Truffle Latte of the United States, Jamocha of Jamaica, Canadian Vanilla Swirl of Canada, and the country's own Coffee Manila.

Nestlé Philippines food services SVP Manny Parroco said the concept of Café Nescafé, which is a global initiative of the world's largest food company, recognizes that coffee consumption is no longer confined to the home or the workplace. He said that in the past several years, the coffee experience has evolved increasingly to mean indulging in coffee moments at any time of the day. He noted that coffee is now often enjoyed away from home or the office in a pleasant environment, with an inviting array of food and other beverage preparations. Therefore, Parroco said, Café Nescafé seeks to provide new dimensions of enjoyment for consumers in appreciating the world's favorite coffee brand.

According to Jet Cornejo, Nestlé Philippines assistant manager for business development, the upscale and comfortable ambiance of Café Nescafé provides a relaxing haven, where coffee can be enjoyed in different ways by patrons who already have associations with Nescafé.

In addition to the Coffees of the World, Café Nescafé offers traditional coffee specialties, chocolate drinks and other flavored beverage preparations. Food items to complement coffee include biscottis, cakes, brownies, cookies, pies, cupcakes, cheesecakes, croques, Nescafé Coffee Cake and Nescafé Cappuccino Jelly.

Other Café Nescafé outlets are located at the Poawerplant Mall in Rockwell Center, Robinson's Place Manila, Glorietta 3 and City Lifestyle in Timog, Quezon City. Soon to open are branches at the Naia Terminal 2, Robinson's Galleria and the Taft Tower, Manila.

For more details and information on Café Nescafé, visit www.nescafe.com.ph. Send your comments, suggestions and other queries about Café Nescafé to café.nescafe@ph.nestle.com.

GLOBE AT SINULOG

Globe Telecom's wireless business head Ferdz dela Cruz (left) opens Globe's Sales Blitz at SM City Cebu during the Sinulog Festival. With him are Globe sales and distribution head Lizanne Uychaco (center) and Cebu City Councilor Jack Jakosalem (right).

PTC kicks off in southern Tagalog

THE PHILIPPINE Tourism Cup (PTC), a sports component of the Department of Tourism's Visit Philippines 2003, held its first qualifying round in Sta. Elena Golf and Country Club Feb. 1. Other qualifying rounds are in Canlubang Golf and Country Club on Feb. 14 and 15, Club Malarayat on Feb. 28 to March 1, the Riviera Golf and Country Club on Feb. 21 and 22, the Eagle Ridge on March 21 and 22, and the Orchard Golf and Country Club on March 28 and 29. The first day of the rounds will be for non-members and the second day will be for the clubs' memberships. The tournament is open to all amateur golfers. Participation fee is P600 excluding green and caddy fees. Interested parties can call the PTC secretariat at 536-1133, and 523-8411 locals 183 and 200.

ASTRING-O-SOL SPECIALIST – DENTIST'S NEW PARTNER

Dr. David Alexander, GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) global affairs director, recently visited the country to lead the introduction of the Astring-o-Sol Specialists to the dentists in Metro Manila. The arrival of Astring-o-Sol Specialist sets the new standard in effectively fighting mouth and throat problems that is safe for daily use. It aims to be the partner of dentists in providing quality oral health care with its specially formulated optimum level of Chlorhexidine Digluconate, the gold standard in anti-plaque and anti-gingivitis treatment. It has time release anti-microbial action to relieve sore throat and fight plaque, gingivitis, mouth ulcers and bad breath. It works up to 12 hours with residual anti-microbial action that lasts up to 24 hours.

Consisting Upholding at Ayala Museum

CONSISTING Upholding, a floor installation by Eric L. Zamuco opened last Jan. 9 at the Ayala Museum Front Gallery. The exhibition was conceptualized and produced while Zamuco was a Freeman fellow at the Vermont Studio Center in the United States last May 2002.

This exhibition differs from Zamuco's previous work, which combine photographic emulsion with painting or sculpture. This time the artist allowed himself to be influenced by what he would read and the materials that were readily available to him at that time. These Scriptural readings and random finds were then utilized as starting points for his work, turning the sculptures into a more tactile body of work with spiritual connections. As Zamuco explains, his pieces are his "spiritual oars."

Eric L. Zamuco is a Fine Arts graduate from the University of the Philippines. In 1994 and 2000, he was a finalist at the Philip Morris Philippine Art Awards. In 2001, Zamuco received the fellowship from VSC and an artist's scholarship from the Ayala Foundation in 2002. The artist has participated in several group shows. This is the third one-man show.

Consisting Upholding ended its run last Jan 31. The Ayala Museum Art Galleries are located at the ground floor of the old Makati Stock Exchange building along Ayala Avenue. For more information, please call Marivez Pedraja at 812-1191 to 95 or e-mail mgpedraja@ayalamuseum.com.

YOUR CHILD'S STACKABLE PAL

A new addition to Chicco's wide range of educational toys is Chicco's 'Stacking Musical Elephant' ideal for babies 3 months to 2 years old. Simply stack the parts of the Musical Elephant onto its rocking base, and listen to the fun melody as each part is stacked one on top of the other. This toy will surely be your child's perfect pal. Not only will he enjoy its attractive colors but also its soft, washable fabric. The Chicco 'Stacking Musical Elephant' is carefully designed to develop a child's audio skills and coordination while playing. Available at all leading department stores nationwide. Chicco is exclusively distributed by Europlay Distributors Co. Inc. located at 25 Quezon Ave. QC.

NESTLÉ EXEC IS DMAP PRESIDENT

Nestlé Philippines' distribution resources management manager Ma. Arlene Azul of supply chain was elected president of the Distribution Management Association of the Philippines (DMAP) for 2003. The DMAP, with 85 member companies, aims to achieve effective distribution of products and materials, and during the new president's term will focus on competency enhancement, distribution network optimization, and collaborative alliance

Product FILES

Mongol Pencils gets award

THE PHILIPPINES' best-known pencil brand, Mongol Pencils, was recently chosen to be the 2002 National Consumers Choice Awardee for being the Top Pencil Brand of the Year. This prestigious award was given in recognition of Mongol's exemplary product excellence, thus benefiting the general public. Evaluations were conducted in cooperation with the National Consumer Affairs Foundation and the Who's Who in the Philippines.

Mongol Pencils have been well known and accepted in the Philippines for over 150 years. Known for its distinctive black, gold and black ferrule and its unique tea-like scent, Mongol has been part of the Filipino's daily life for the longest time. Amalgamated Specialties Corporation (Amspec) manufactures Mongol Pencils and other school and office supplies.

BITS and Clips

Sienna College '78 silver reunion

MEMBERS of the Sienna College, Quezon City High School Batch 1978 are invited to attend their Silver Jubilee Reunion on Feb. 15, 3 p.m., at the Sienna Hall. This year's celebration is guided by the theme "Building a Community in the Dominican Tradition of Truth and Compassion for Humanity." A series of exciting activities are lined up and will be discussed during the reunion. For more details about the event and confirmation of attendance, call Judith Baltoa Palisa in Sienna College at 712-3668 or Dr. Luisa Lopez-Malabanan, 364-2113/0920-2518022, or Dolly Bunoan, 801-8330/0918-9386260.

Timezone on time

TIMEZONE customers can now avail themselves of a free S-Shock sports watch for every P500 purchase of a Powercard. The unisex sports watch, perfect with weekend warrior gear, is Timezone's gift to customers who keep coming back for more of Timezone's unique brand of fun and entertainment. Participating Timezone branches are Glorietta 2 and 4, Greenbelt 3, Alabang Main and Cinema, Ayala Center Cebu, Megamall and Greenhills, New Greenbelt Mall, Starmall, Metropoint Mall (Edsa-Taft) and at the Greenhills Theater Mall. Promo lasts till Feb. 20.

Immigration authorities coming to Manila

AFTER the controversial closure of embassies comes an all powerful immigration force composed of top immigration lawyers and specialists from abroad. These lawyers intend to open opportunities to live, work, study, do business and prosper abroad. The event, titled "Immigration Voices With a Mission", top-billed by Canadian immigration lawyer Stephen Abraham, Australian and New Zealand immigration lawyer Ray Turner, US immigration specialist Crispin Aranda and Dionne Ang, and the caregiver authorities Michael Steven and lawyer Tirso Zagada. Catch them live at the Philippine Trade Training Center (PTTC) on Feb. 22, Saturday. This is another first from Immigration Network Services Inc. For more details, call the INS secretariat at 891-5686 to 89 and 891-5920 to 21.

Bedans come home

THE GRAND SBC Alumni Homecoming kicks off at 2 p.m. on Feb. 22 at the college campus with a Eucharistic celebration to be concelebrated by Rt. Rev. Tarcisio Ma. Narciso OSB, abbott-chancellor, and Rev. Anscar J. Chupungco OSB, rector-president. The host classes are high school 1978 (silver jubilarians) and high school 1953 (golden jubilarians). The program proper at the college quadrangle starts at 6 p.m. TV personality Ruby Rodriguez hosts the program together with Jojo Pena of HS class '78. Prior to the homecoming, the Red and White Ball will be held at the NBC Tent, Global City through the kindness of Dr. Manuel Pangilinan, PLDT president and CEO. A big production number from the Nation Broadcasting Corp features Dulce, Ana Fegi and Robert Sena. Calvin Millado emcees. For inquiries, call the San Beda Alumni secretariat care of professor Joffre Alajar or Wilma Abellanosa at 735-5995 or 735-6011 local 2740.

CALOOCAN CHAMBER HOLDS FORUM

The Century Park Hotel was the venue of the 42nd induction ceremony and forum of the Caloocan Chamber of Commerce and Industries Inc. This was held at the hotel's Kachina room last Feb. 7. This year's theme was 'Bridging towards economic development.' In photo (from left) seated are Mr Dominique Kua, governor for NCR Carlos Cabochan, president Linda Que and Teofilo De Guzman; standing (from left) J. Roger Gan, Tony Keh, Peter Tan and Bobby Zamora.

PSBank awards P3 million in promo

Marichu Novales-Damaso of Davao City is PSBank's Megamillion Challenge grand draw winner. She won P3,000,000 in cash, tax-free, during the grand draw held on Jan. 10, and was witnessed by the Department of Trade and Industry.

The other consolation prizes drawn were one P100,000 and two P50,000. The winners were: Emelito and/or Lolita Yparraguirre of Davao, P100,000; Anniela Y. Soliven and/or Marina M. De Rama of Manila; and Goodwill Industries of Cebu Inc., both P50,000.

The PSBank Megamillion Challenge promo commenced on July 2002 and culminated in December 2002, and has given away a total of P8,000,000. For the six-month promo period, P1,000,000 in cash, tax-free, and other consolation cash prizes, tax-free, were raffled off each month.

The promo was PSBank's way of saying thank you to the bank's new and long-time clients. Depositors who maintained an average daily balance of P10,000 or US$500 each month qualified for one raffle number and was valid in all areas, nationwide served by PSBank's 103 branches.

STC Manila homecoming

THE ALUMNAE of St. Theresa's College Manila will hold a dinner-dance homecoming, billed "Friendship and Memories", on Saturday, Feb. 22, at the Rizal Ballroom of the Shangri-la Hotel in Makati. Registration starts at 4 p.m. followed by a Mass celebrated by Fr. Jojo Magadia SJ and dinner at 6:30 p.m. The highlight of the evening will be "Theresians on Stage", a musical production featuring alumnae, directed by Freddie R. Santos, assisted by Gina Valenciano and Cicey Alejo. For more information, alumnae can call their class representatives or the St. Theresa's Alumnae Association-Manila care of Tess Abellon, telefax 740-1810, Cecile Macam Perlas, 372-0601; or 0916-3730617, fax 731-7091 or 781-4130, Susan Lanuza Nieva at 724-6334 or 0917-8406334.

SUCCESSION MANAGEMENT

Fight war for talent by growing own leaders

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

TECHNOLOGICAL developments and intense competition demand a new breed of business executives. This new breed must be able to make quick decisions based on less data, should have motivational skills and marketing savvy to make it in today's competitive world.

Human resource consultants around the world agree that it is difficult to find members of this new breed of leaders.

Talent shortage

Top consulting firm McKinsey and Co. said in its studies that companies have complained that there was not enough leadership talent at times or was "chronically short of talent."

The influential Conference Board, on the other hand, says that most of the CEOs in the United States, Europe and Japan have cited competition for talent as one of its top five concerns.

So where does a company with plans of making it big in the future go about looking for these leaders?

William C. Byham, chair and chief executive officer of Development Dimensions Int'l., believes that the best place to look for these leaders is within the company itself.

There is no choice because an increasing number of companies face an unusually large shortfall in executive talent brought on by: retirement, downsizing in the 1990s, need for leaders with more competencies, need for higher-performing leaders and poaching by other companies.

One way to protect companies from these challenges is to "grow their own leaders."

"Growing your own leaders sends a positive message throughout your workforce. Promoting people is good for morale—and essential to a positive company culture," Byham says.

"People want to join and stay with an organization that develops its own people. And promoting from within is consistent with an empowerment philosophy that encourages people to take on responsibility, assume risk, measure outcomes and grow through their achievements," Byham adds.

RP survey

A survey on the succession management practices in the Philippines, shows that most companies here actually have a program in place to fill top positions with its own people.

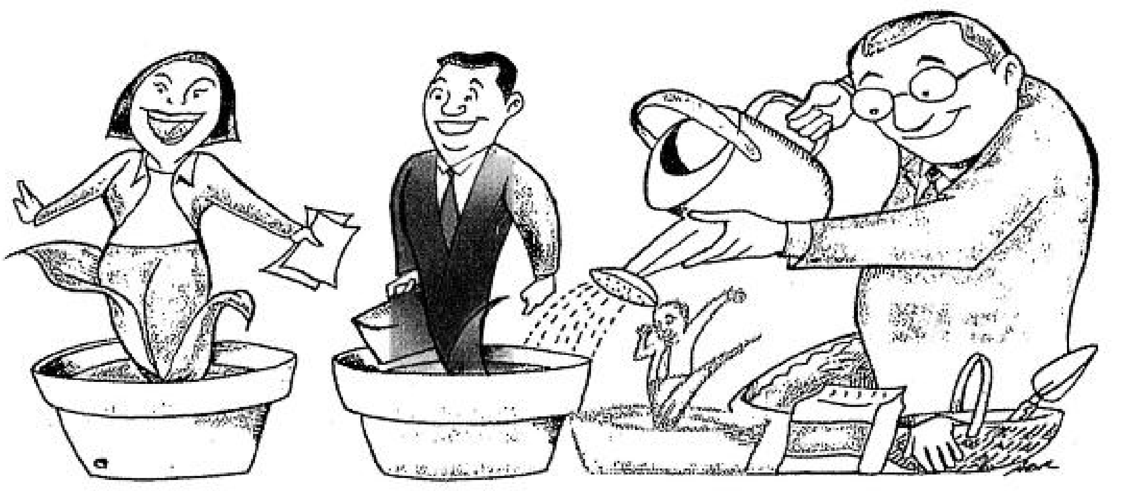
The study prepared by Victor L. Magdaraog, vice president of SGV-Development Dimensions Int'l. showed that 59 percent of the respondents have a systematic process for making succession decisions and these plans cover approximately 36 percent of management and leadership jobs.

The study also showed that 61 percent of the people who were put in place through a succession management plan stay in their positions and are successful.

Byham says the findings are consistent with findings in the rest of the world, which showed that growing own leaders is a more effective way of filling up vacancies than going out.

Failure rate

Byham tells the INQUIRER in an interview that 40 to 50 percent of outside hires do not meet management's expectations within the first three years because either they do not fit with the culture of the company or they fell far short of their promise.



Byham adds that going outside for executive talent is an expensive, time-consuming process. He says the cost of an executive search can easily stretch into six figures. The starting pay of a senior leader brought in from the outside is also almost always higher than what is paid to someone promoted from within.

"It is also risky. There is no room for guesswork in gauging an outside candidate's strengths and weaknesses. Hiring mistakes at the senior level can be devastating to an organization," he says.

He says an effective internal succession system involves identifying a pool of middle executives who have the potential to become future leaders.

The criteria varies depending on the company, but normally these future executives have experience, ability to adapt to different environments, have an open mind, take feedback well and can deal with different cultures and different people.

Leaders pool

Once the members of the pool are identified, probably five or even 10 years before they take on senior positions, they are put through different situations to see which ones would eventually take on the top positions.

And in all these efforts, the CEO should take the lead.

"I am not suggesting that a CEO make succession management his or her top priority—just that it be recognized as a priority. Then, the CEO's job is to see that the succession management program gets the appropriate attention and commitment of organizational resources," he says.

Headhunting . . .

From page C8

SANTOS

training abroad to be oriented with this system.

He says the methodology starts with the job order. The MRI system, he says, requires their consultants to ask clients very specific questions about the position and the skills that would be needed by the person who will fill that post.

"To do a good job order, you have to ask the right questions," he says.

Santos holds the franchise for MRI in the Philippines. Serendipity drove him to it. He says he saw an ad in the Asian Wall Street Journal about a franchise for North Asia. It took a while but he got the franchise for the Philippines.

He says the advantage of MRI is that it has an international network a good system.

"Our target is mid-level to CEO levels. We have done procurements from other countries," he cites. "Many MNCs who search abroad for placement of senior executives for the local offices."

And how lucrative is the business?

It can be quite lucrative, says Santos. Big companies pay a substantial amount for the right recruit—up to over 20 percent of the new hire's annual salary.

And salaries of CEOs can go up to eight digits in the Philippines.

So far MRI has already placed a CEO in the country.

The price may be steep but as Santos points out it can be costlier to hire the wrong person.

The MRI head admits there is a need to educate local companies, on the possible advantages of using search companies.

Philippine culture in particular and Asian cultural in general has not led to substantial use of headhunters to find the right people. The Asian culture usually requires that somebody in the organization knows the person being hired whereas in the Western setting, it does not count.

"A stumbling block to headhunting in the Philippines is the attitude of the people," says Santos.

HR reliance

There is still substantial reliance on the HR department to get the right people. But if you are hiring top executives, the expertise of a third party may be needed, he says.

Santos says things are changing however, particularly with the Chinese-owned firms.

"Chinese clients who never before thought of the value of headhunters are realizing this now," he says.

Some headhunters also conduct seminars on recruitment. They meet with HR people.

He says a firm has already asked them if they can take care of their entire HR department. But he says their focus is more on top level executives.

For now, Santos and his staff of eight are busy making calls and listing the executives firms are looking for.

For now Santos says the ones in demand are marketing executives. The movements in this industry are quick and most of the consumer based firms are always on the look out for bright young talents.

As for Santos, his previous jobs in banking, marketing have created enough network for him to tap into for heads to hunt. He used to work with Bank of America, Citytrust, BPI and Global Bank before going on his own.

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Headhunting is more than just giving out CVs

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

TIME was when a company worked hard to produce everything it needed. As a firm grew, it expanded upstream or downstream to make itself as self-sufficient as possible.

Then outsourcing became the byword. Companies started at making other people do the work they used to do. They hired subcontractors or toll manufacturers to produce what they invented.

Doing this became popular because it removed production issues and in particular, labor headaches.

With production and even marketing being outsourced, why not outsource personnel hiring too?

Thus headhunting became in vogue (although the business is actually decades old in the US).

In the Philippines headhunting, or hiring a firm to look for the most qualified person to hire, became popular in the local market only in the late '80s.

Thriving business

The head of a large international search firm says headhunting is a thriving business in the Philippines although it is still not as widely accepted here as in Western countries. Trust is very important in the business.

"The very senior executives will not just give their CVs (curriculum vitae) to anyone. It has to be to someone they trust," says Heriberto Y. Santos, president and CEO of MRI Worldwide Philippines Inc. MRI is the world's largest search company.

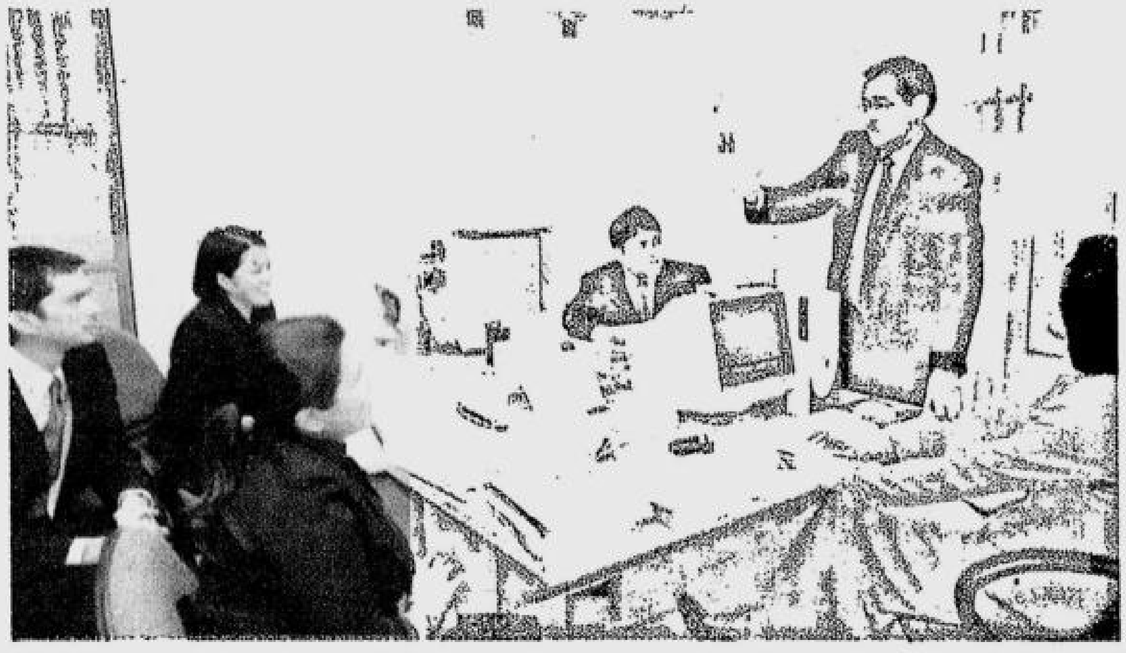
Santos says most local companies still rely on their HR departments to recruit new people. He points out that in the US for example, hiring for all mid-level executives up to the CEO are done via a head hunter.

The difficulty in growing the industry is not helped by the fact that some of the search companies are simply "CV bashers."

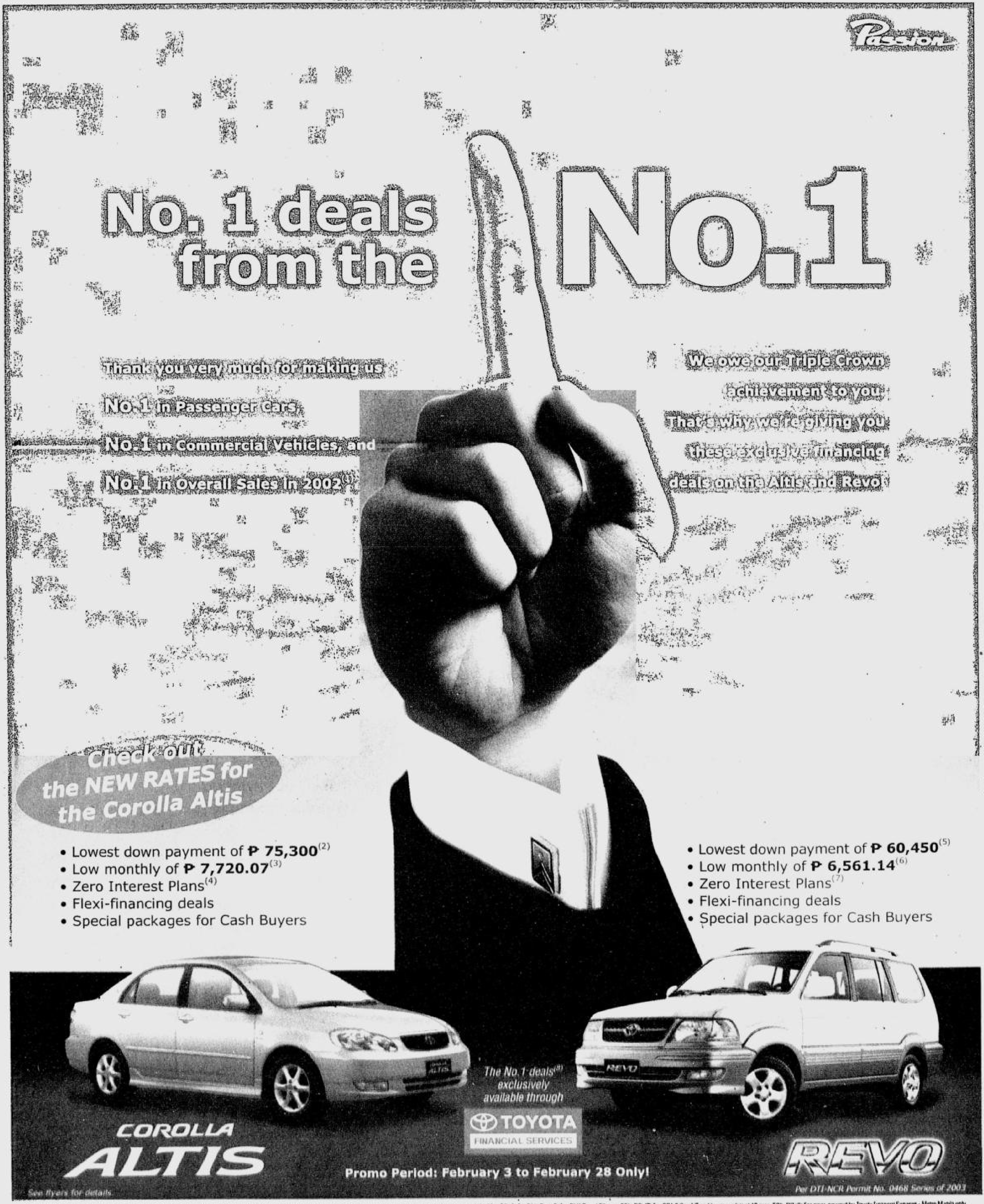
"CV bashers" refer to those companies that simply give CVs to companies without first establishing an executive's capability and his or her suitability to the position being filled.

He boasts that MRI has 42 steps in hunting for the right "heads" and most of its people outside the US have to undergo

HEADHUNTING/ C7



SANTOS maps the next moves to find more firms who need to replace "heads." ROGER CARPIO



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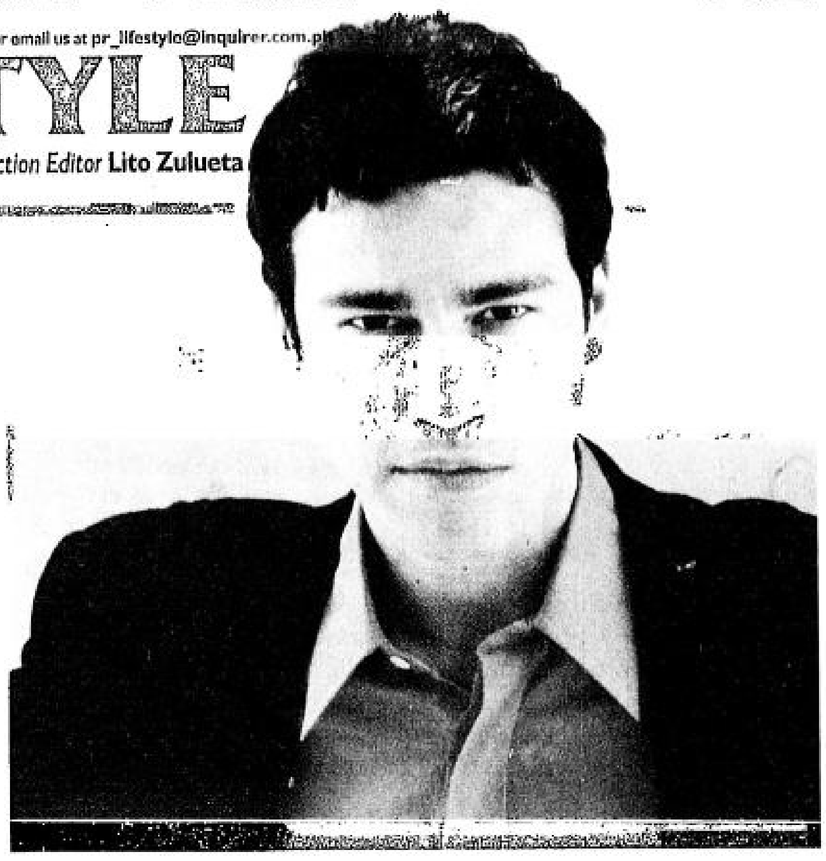
LIFESTYLE
Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso ▫ Subsection Editor Lito Zulueta

P29!
DUNKIN' DONUTS

MARIO FRANGOULIS

Living the dream



THE CLASSICAL singer is flawless in singing Italian, Spanish, Greek and even English lyrics.

The dashing young tenor from Greece may be the perfect troubadour on Valentine's Day, but in his first international album, he writes and sings songs of childhood's pains

By James P. Ong
Contributor

ARE YOUNG and good-looking classical singers replacing the popularity of boy bands? Mario Frangoulis, an "operatic tenor" from Greece, is the latest addition to the genre of "modern classical" music—first popularized by Andrea Bocelli and now being carried on by the likes of Russell Watson and Josh Groban.

Frangoulis released his international debut album "Sometimes I Dream" late last year. The video to one of the tracks, "Vincero, Perdero," is currently being played on television music channels.

But don't expect hard classical stuff— leave that to the three tenors. "Sometimes I Dream" is a crossover album that blends classical music with Frangoulis' Mediterranean heritage, meaning romantic songs in Italian, Spanish, Greek and English. Frangoulis himself composed the song.

LIVING/ D4

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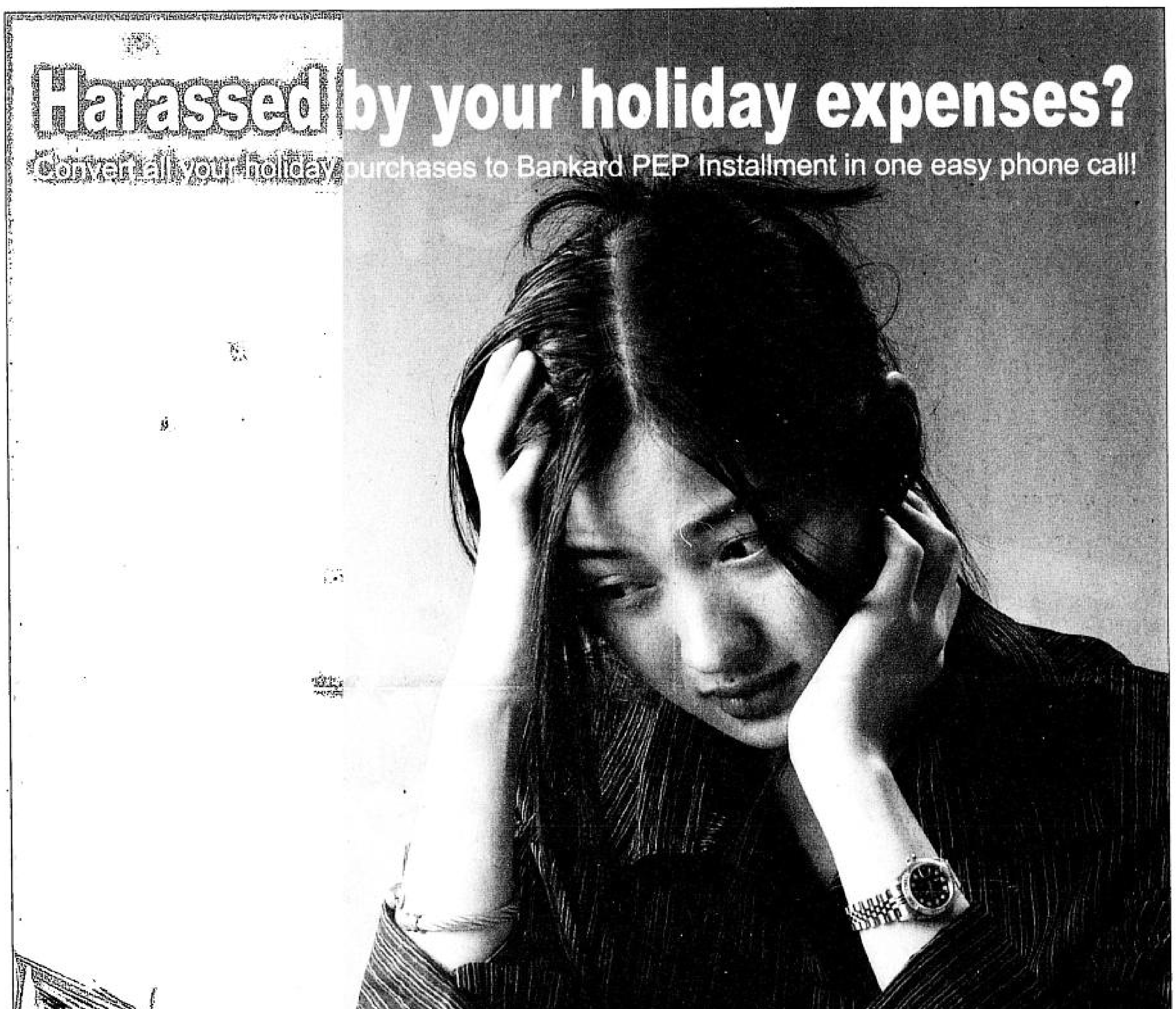
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Love Makes My Week

A pre-Valentine Special

Dining and dating with a blast

FEBRUARY 14 is marked as an inevitable sugar-honey day all over the world. As the date gradually peeks from our calendars, we anticipate the exchanging of cards, giving of flowers and chocolates, listening to endless romantic music, and enjoying dining out with our loved ones.

Foodparks by Raintree will celebrate Valentine's the only way we know how, with a big blast! It is treating everyone to a special and jovial treat for the month of February. The Foodparks will be transformed into a meeting place of singles, a fanciful haven for lovebirds, a perfect spot to reminisce about a past love or to look forward to a new adventure, promising nothing but romance entwined with fun.

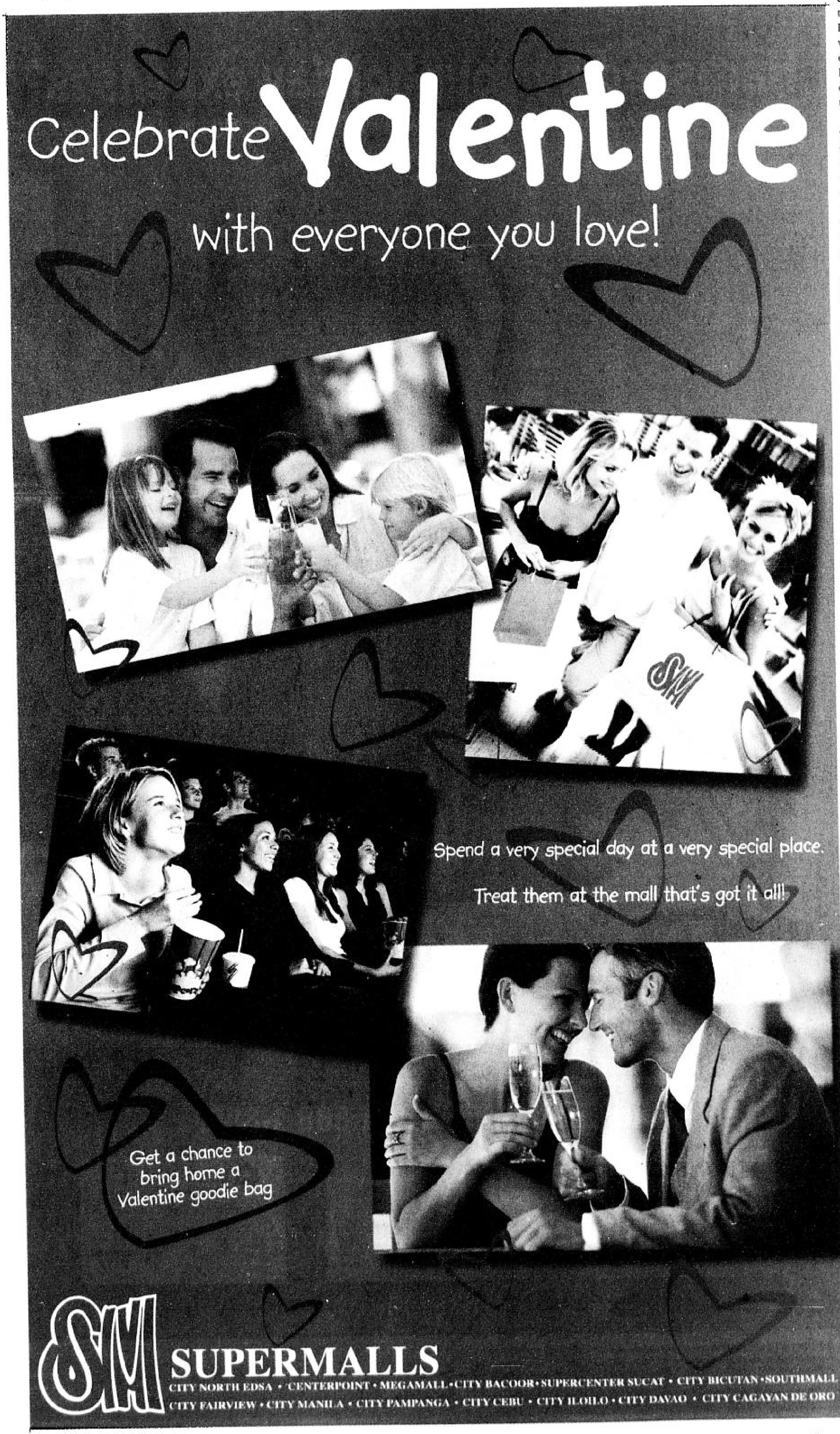
Customers are given a chance to detach from the hasty demands of office work during the love month. Free romantic movie nights will sweep the floor of Food Odyssey, 11th floor, LKG Tower, Ayala Avenue, every Wednesday of the month. While on Feb. 14, singles will have a chance to meet their match when it plays interactive Singled Out with two known celebrity models. Food and Art Gallerie at the 12th floor of GT Tower International, Ayala Avenue, will also have movie nights on Feb. 28.

To add excitement on Feb. 14, Food and Art Gallerie will host a zestful barbecue party in the garden with full band entertainment to complete the celebration. Food Park at the Enterprise, that dwells perfectly at the 4th level of The Enterprise Building, Ayala Center corner Paseo de Roxas, Makati City, will calm your senses and rejuvenate your minds by rendering Jazz and Acoustic music as it resonates the cool Friday evenings of February. And Love Day at the Food Park will shake the crowd with dance music played by known performers. Valentine's month at the Marketplace Foodcourt at Times Plaza, UN Avenue, will create a roar with its euphoric full band entertainment and disco nights for everyone.

Co-presentor Body and Soul and Nature's Gift from Australia will also be giving free consultation to lucky customers via a "stress test." Their booth will also offer free facial, and customers will get a chance to win gift certificates from Body and Soul's newly opened Makati Spa. Hallmark will also give away free Valentine's cards to lucky guests of any outlets with a minimum amount purchase of P100 at their favorite food stalls.

This event is also brought to you by Crossover 105.1, a unique blend of today's cool Jazz and Rhythm and Blues.

For more inquiries regarding events, call the marketing department at 752-5681.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A matching and dating game in a Frenzy

THERE'S an exciting web-based Valentine promo billed as The Frenzy Matching & Dating Game. Men and women aged 18 and above can participate and get a chance to go out on a Valentine date. Participants from Metro Manila will have a chance to wine and dine with the Frenzy television commercial models—Mark and Joan. Metro Cebu and Davao participants, on the other hand, can win an exciting date with other participants who match their personalities.

Interested parties only need to go online and log on to the Frenzy website and fill out a form with personal facts. Other than the ASLs (age, sex, location) and other pertinent information, the hopefuls must answer a couple of questions such as "Do you agree on blind dating?", "At what age should a guy/girl go out on a date?".

It only takes about 10 minutes to complete an official entry. The prize at stake is a Valentine package which includes a dinner and a show, service vehicle, a bouquet of flowers and chocolates, plus a chance to get up close and personal with his/her dinner date. Winners will be notified either by e-mail or their contact numbers. Two winners (male and female) will be chosen from Metro Manila, Metro Cebu and Metro Davao but all participants who filled out the online questionnaire will receive Frenzy gift packs. Deadline for entries is Feb 12. For more information, log on to www.frenzy.com.ph. This event is made possible with Frenzy Condoms.

Boosting evangelization projects with Valentine affair

THE EVANGELIZATION projects of the Salt and Light for Christ Charismatic Community will get a big boost through a fund-raising benefit to be sponsored by the group on Saturday, Feb. 15, at the World Trade Center, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City.

The dinner-dance party, which will also benefit the Salesian Foundation, will feature the Spirit of '67, a top rock and roll band which has been packing music lounges all over Metro Manila.

Through the musical event, baby boomers and yuppies who love the music of the '60s and the '70s will enjoy non-stop dance music, dinner, and the chance to win raffle prizes.

The Spirit of '67 will demonstrate, through its music, why the phenomenal rock and roll of the '60s and '70s has outlived other kinds of dance music, and has made revival bands big attractions in hotels and music lounges.

Tickets are priced at P750 each. For inquiries, call John Lansang at 634-8839 or the Salt and Light for Charismatic Community secretariat at 633-9334.

Sweet deals, surprises from the Araneta Group

WHEN you see a sudden explosion of roses and hearts in abundance, it's a sure sign that February, widely acknowledged as the love month, has finally gotten around to being here again.

Araneta Center is pleased to join this month-long celebration of love by announcing a number of special treats for its loyal customers.

A Sweethearts Specialty Sale will be held at the following Ali Mall shops: 99 or Less, Anonymous, Gift Gate, Papemelroti, and 20 & Up. Valentine gift items will go on sale for as high as 50 percent off. Promo lasts until Feb. 16.

The Thank You for the Music Band will regale us with its special "Abba Tribute" concert on Feb. 15, 8 p.m. at the Araneta Coliseum. A P2,000 ticket will entitle you to a free VIP dinner, and a special seat in the first 12 rows of the Big Dome.

A minimum single receipt purchase at the following establishments entitles the customer to a free perfume flower in the Something Sweet, Fragrant and Free promo: P100 at the Food Court and Food Strip, P200 at the Coliseum Circle, P300 at Ali Mall and the Farmers Plaza, and two Cinema Lodge tickets for the theaters. Only purchases made on Feb. 14, Valentine's Day, are valid for the promo, with a maximum of five perfume flowers per receipt.

Finally, a post-Valentine treat is at hand as the New Farmer's Plaza holds its "Meet and Match: Date with a Star" promo. This opportunity to meet favorite actors or actresses and afterwards go on a date with them awaits shoppers on Feb. 15 at 3 p.m.

Be fit for your significant 'other'

TO THE young and old alike, love is sweeter the second time around this Valentine's season. At Slimmers World, so is getting back into shape. Not only are its operations full blast from 6:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays and 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturdays, but its time-tested and client-proven programs, popular memberships, slimming treatments, relaxing spa services, facial and skin systems are also being offered at great promotional prices this February. These special Valentine program packages can be shared by any twosome.

Everybody is invited to the pre-Valentine festivities on Wednesday, Feb. 12. There will be a thanksgiving mass at 3 p.m., followed by dating games and other surprise activities that clients will surely love. It also conducts free body fat analysis and figure consultation.

Visit SWI-Greenhills at the 27th floor of the Atlanta Center, 31 Annapolis Street, Greenhills, or call Annalyn for free consultation at 726-6505 or 0918-9203392.

Who knows, even before this Valentine season is over, your new figure will be so fit for your love.

Boyz II Men makes you fall in love again

CELEBRATE Valentine's at the biggest and most romantic Valentine concert ever to hit Manila as Jag Jeans and Smart Communications Inc. bring the masters of smooth, mega platinum R and B group Boyz II Men live at the Fort Open Field on Friday, Feb. 14 at 8:30 p.m. This once-in-a-lifetime concert is also made possible with Close-Up.

What better way to celebrate Valentine's Day—either single, committed, engaged or married. You will melt when you hear the 6-time Grammy winners serenade you with some of their most unforgettable songs such as "I'll Make Love to You", "End of the Road," "Four Seasons of Loneliness", "On Bended Knee", "A Song For Mama", "Water Runs Dry", and their latest hit single "The Color of Love."

And get ready for Boyz II Men's undying love anthem "One Sweet Day", a duet with Mariah Carey, which stayed on the pop singles chart for a record-breaking 16 weeks. The song also broke the adult contemporary record by staying number one for 13 weeks.

Tickets are now available at all SM Ticketnet outlets. For ticket inquiries and reservations, call 911-5555 or 373-5734.

Romantic packages at Networld Hotel

NETWORLD Hotel offers a Valentine package for only P2,600 net. Package includes overnight stay in a de luxe room, set breakfast and set dinner for two, a bottle of red wine, use of dry or steam sauna and jacuzzi facilities for two, and a 20-percent discount on massage services.

For lunch or dinner specials, The Café Sampaguita at the hotel offers P350.00 net per person. This includes chocolates for the ladies and a bottle of wine for every two persons.

Promo packages are available until Feb. 24. For reservations and inquiries, call 536-7777, fax 536-5835, or e-mail sales@networldhotel.com.ph.

Bazaar in The Season of hearts

COME to A Bazaar in The Season of Love at the St. Jerome Church, Motortown Parking lot, Alabang Town Center from Feb. 14 to 16. Shop to your heart's delight from a vast array of quality goods at affordable prices from 10 a.m. to midnight. Dine Al Fresco. Experience all-day fun and entertainment. On Feb.14, 10 a.m., is the bazaar opening. At 9 p.m., it's the M-Power Band. On Feb. 15, 2 p.m., there will be games and activities for kids. At 9 p.m., relive the '60s with the Moonstrucks Band. On Feb.16, at 2 p.m., an acrobat and magic show thrills the crowd. Mass will be celebrated at 6 p.m.

Toblerone and strawberries at the Old Swiss Inn

COME and celebrate Valentine's from Feb. 13 to 16, for lunch and dinner, with a special menu from the Old Swiss Inn, featuring grilled rack of lamb or halibut, as well as popular aphrodisiacs such as oysters, wild mushrooms, and strawberries. End dinner with its Toblerone decadent cake for more sinful pleasure. Wine and fresh roses will be given, courtesy of Italfood and Prestige Blooms. Call 818-8251/818-0098 (Makati) or 521-3002 (Paco) for reservations. The Old Swiss Inn is located at the ground floor, Olympia Courtyard Suites, Makati Avenue, beside the Peninsula, and at the ground floor, Garden Plaza Hotel, 1030 Belen Street, Paco, Manila, beside Paco Park.

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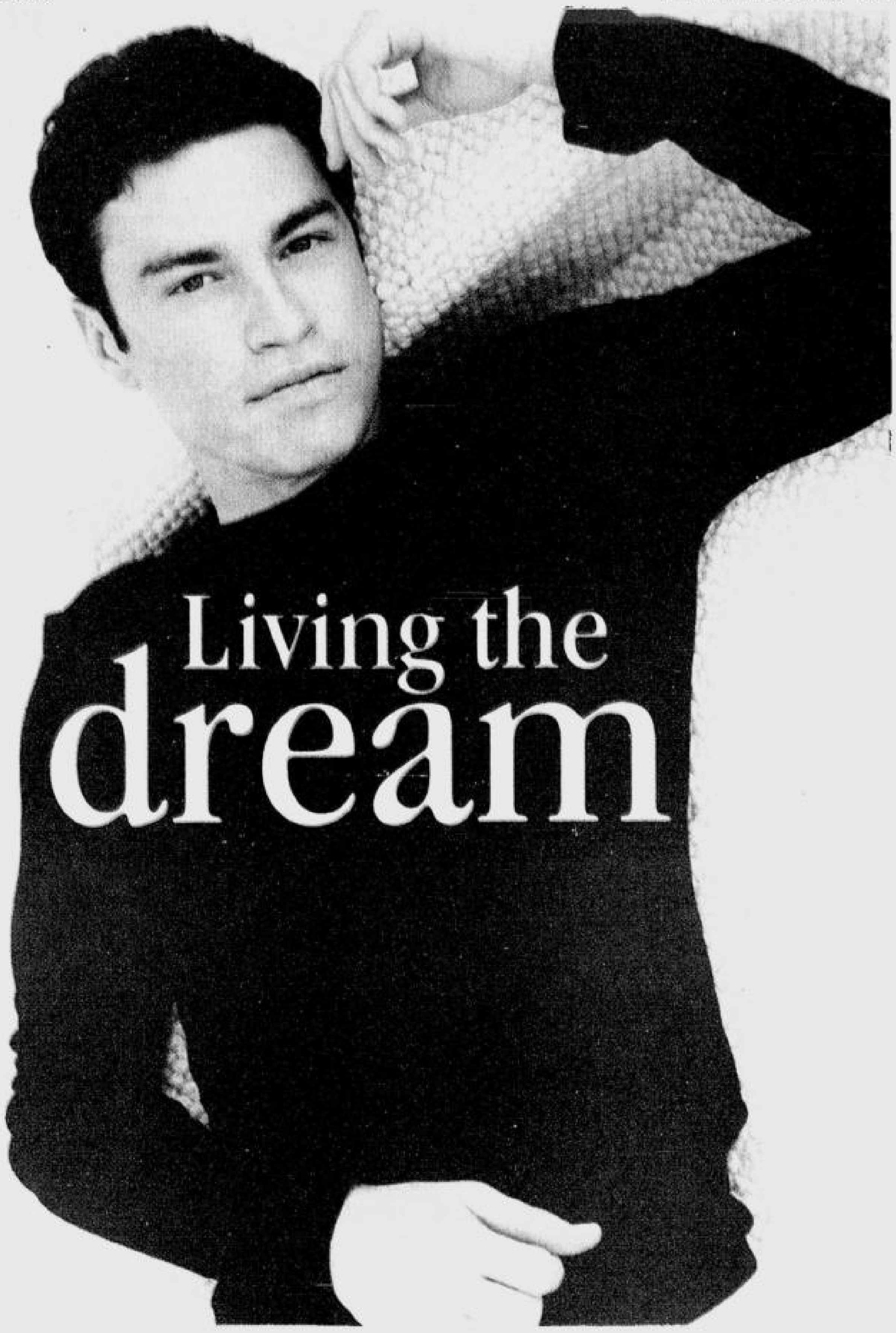

From page D1

Childhood pain

The title track sums up the experience of Frangoulis's life, a pop tune inspired by an aria from Puccini's "Tosca," which he has always sung in every audition.

The album itself is about the pains of his childhood—he was born in Rhodesia (before it became Zimbabwe) but because of the political situation in Africa, he was sent to live with an aunt and a sister in Athens when he was four years old.

The lyrics of the song "Vincero, Perdero" translate to "I will win, I will lose." But, as Frangoulis has said in interviews, "Either way I will do it on my own. I have only myself on this journey, and I have always taken risks, tried to make my life better, and this song is a very personal statement of that."

He wrote the melody for "Ton Eafto Tou Paidi" ("Himself as a Child"), but asked a young Greek poet whose work he admired to provide the lyrics. "The song is about coming to terms with childhood, with the past, about becoming whole… I'm stronger for what I've experienced, and I'm grateful for all the love and passion and joy."

Experience

Frangoulis has always loved singing. "I always sang, from an early age, with a record player—with Greek singers, of course, but also recordings of movie musicals, Frank Sinatra, Barbra Streisand."

He studied the violin at the Athens conservatorium when he was a kid. At 17, he moved on to London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama where he learned acting.

In 1993, upon a friend's dare and because he knew a few arias, he auditioned—and won—the Maria Callas Prize. It was there and then that he discovered the operatic side of his tenor voice. He went on to the Juilliard School of Music on a scholarship.

He thought of operatic singing as something for older people until "I saw a performance of 'Carmen' in Athens with Jose Carreras and Agnes Baltsa, and I realized I could be all of those things."

His forays into theater include playing Tony in "West Side Story" at the venerable La Scala in Milan, and Danny Zuko in the musical "Grease" in Athens.

But before the lead roles, he was a member of the choir that performed in London in 1995 for the 10th anniversary of the opening of "Les Miserables"— the same show where Lea Salonga was Eponine. (Three years later, he would play the leading role of Marius on West End.)

Popularity

Back in his native Athens, he would perform some more and gain a national following—eventually attracting the attention of the local Sony Classical label, which signed him up in 1998. His albums there have been chart-toppers.

In his first international release, under the same label, he draws freely on opera, rock and film music. He interprets in Italian the 1960s Moody Blues hit "Nights in White Satin," which he says is one of his favorite songs of all time. He even gets Justin Hayward, the song's original performer, to sing along with him.

He also sings, in his distinct expressive voice, "Buon Giorno Principessa" from the Oscar-winning "Life is Beautiful" and a popular Neapolitan dance number titled "Luna Rossa."

"Any beautiful song without strong lyrics is like a child without a family," Frangoulis once said. With "Sometimes I Dream," he weaves a tightly knit album that would be hard to wake out of.

UPON a friend's dare, Mario Frangoulis auditioned for and won the Callas Prize.

Maxed out

THERE are two things that make your period inconvenient. One: the simple fact that it is that time of the month, and two: you're not comfortable with the pad you're using.

We've all heard the sad stories of girls excusing themselves from gimmicks and way-cool skirts and pants because of their heavy flow. You've probably experienced this too. Because of heavy days, you've skipped that taebo class or that tennis match for fear of "accidents" ruining your outfit and poise. It's the heavy days when a lot of women feel at their worst, wanting to lock themselves up in their room until it is all over.

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‘Carmen’ opens 8th year of Ballet Manila

Russian choreographer Irina Sitnikova will stage ‘Raymonda Divertissement’

PRINCIPAL dancer Lisa Macuja-Elizalde as Carmen

JUNIOR principals Jeffrey Espejo as Escamillo, Elline Damian as Carmen, senior soloist Eduardo Espejo as Don Jose and member Gabrielle Conde as Micaela

PREMIERE danseur Osias Barroso as Don Jose with Macuja-Elizalde

“ONCE Upon a Ballet,” Ballet Manila’s eighth season offering at the Star Theater, CCP Complex, Pasay City, will run starting Feb. 21. Season subscriptions are now available at discounted prices.

“Once Upon a Ballet” is a full concert program in three parts. The much-awaited Russian classic “Raymonda Divertissement” opens the program with Slavic flair as restaged by Irina Sitnikova, guest ballet mistress from the Marinsky Theatre and the Vaganova Academy in St. Petersburg, Russia. “Ecole,” a choreography by Oasis Barroso that traces the fundamentals of the Russian school of dancing, will be performed by both the BM company and school. Capping the performance will be the Eric V. Cruz masterpiece, the dance-drama “Carmen.”

“The performance of ‘Carmen’ this year is truly significant for Ballet Manila as one of our senior soloists, Melanie Motus, will be dancing with us for the very last time,” say BM artistic director Lisa Macuja-Elizalde. “Melanie is retiring from active dancing after ‘Carmen’ and I think that her portrayal of this manipulative, ambitious and sexy temptress will certainly be a performance to be remembered. We will miss her.”

“Once Upon a Ballet’s” “Raymonda,” “Ecole” and “Carmen” are collective efforts that will showcase the combined talents of Ballet Manila principal dancers Macuja-Elizalde, Barroso, Elline Damian, Jeffrey Espejo and Eduardo Espejo, as well as the company’s soloists, members, apprentices, company and school scholars. “Even our tiny baby ballerinas will have featured roles in ‘Ecole.’ This is where we start—in school,” says Macuja-Elizalde.

Performances are scheduled for 6 p.m. on Feb. 21 and 28, 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. on Feb. 22 and March 1, 3 p.m. on Feb. 23 and March 2 at Star Theater. Call 525-5967, 400-0292 or 404-3086.

JEFFREY Espejo as Don Jose and senior soloist Melanie Motus as Carmen

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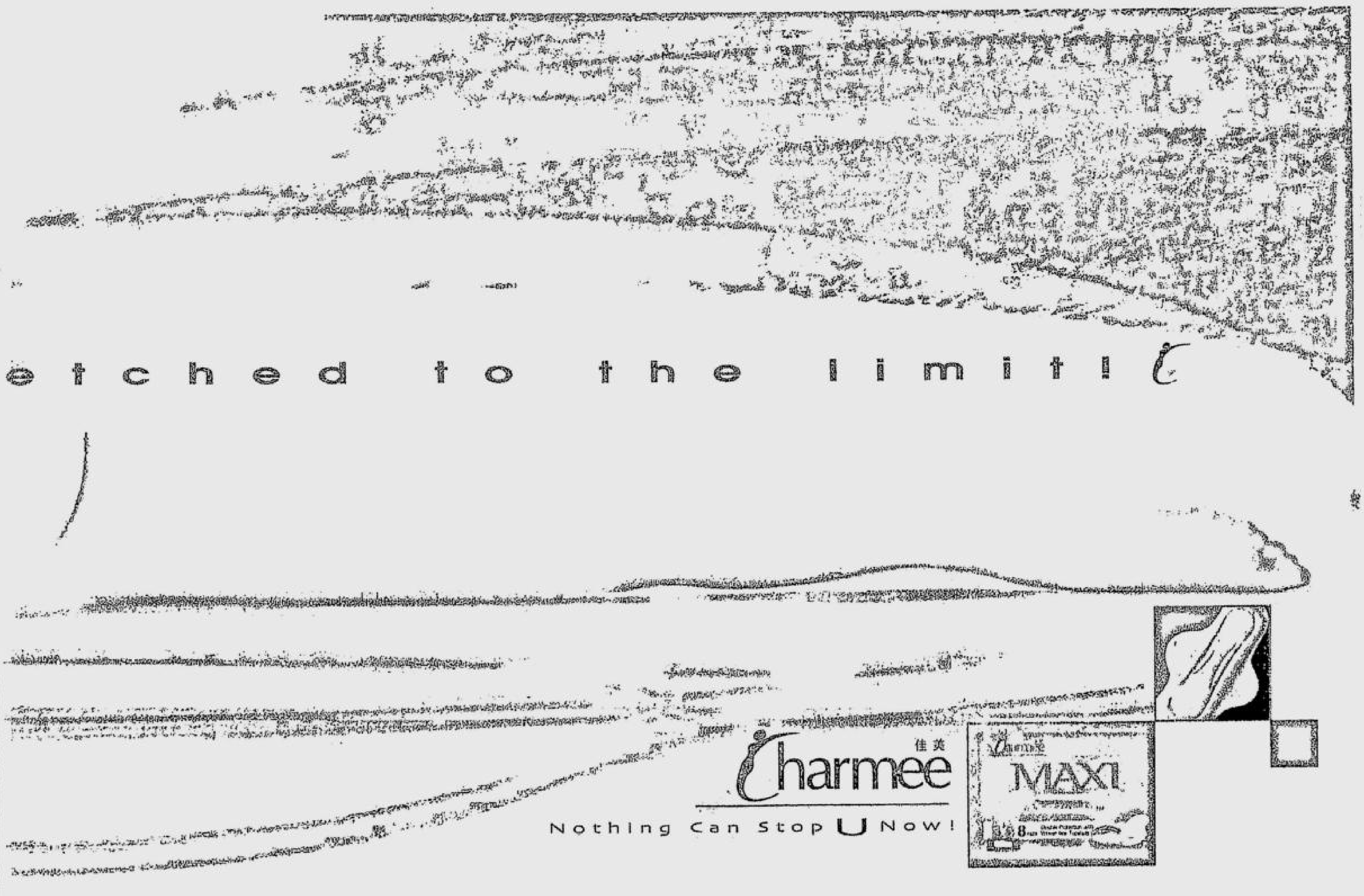


The daughters also shine

REGINA Buenaventura

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

TWO young violinists, on separate occasions recently, impressed Manila music lovers with their prodigious talents. Needless to say, a sumptuous feast of violin music greeted the New Year! Both violinists are women and they belong to musical families. They affirm the truism: "The fruit does not fall far from the tree."

The violinists are Eliza Quirit, daughter of violinist and conductor, Julian "Jojo" Quirit, and Regina Buenaventura, grand-daughter of the late maestro, Antonino Buenaventura, National Artist for Music (1988), and Rizalina Exconde-Buenaventura, retired professor of violin at the University of the Philippines College of Music.

The young Quirit wowed friends and benefactors of the San Miguel Philharmonic Orchestra and San Miguel Master Chorale during a send-off soiree for her father in the Club House of former Ambassador Eduardo Cojuangco, big boss of San Miguel Corporation, on Bougainvilla Street in New Manila. The performance was also a treat for friends and supporters of both the orchestra and chorale.

She played the second and third movements of the demanding Tchaikovsky masterpiece, the celebrated "Violin Concerto in D Major Op. 35." Quirit delivered the piece with a virtuoso touch: brilliant tones, articulate phrasing, sensitive coloring and keen musicality.

Perfect collaboration

The father and daughter tandem was a marvel to behold. The collaboration was perfect, and music making went on spontaneously. The daughter played the second movement with sensitivity, dishing out its somber, plaintive disposition without sounding sentimental. Her bowing was well-tempered allowing the tones to unfold clearly with just the right measure of affectation.

In the third movement, she let loose an awesome brilliance, rendering all the difficult passages with engaging dispatch. Both she and the orchestra played with gusto, and the audience punctuated its applause at the end with crisp shouts of bravo.

When the father dad took a violin and joined his daughter on stage for a duet, the audience, led by Cojuangco and amiable wife, Gretchen, was even more delighted, breaking into a deafening applause at the end.

Carl Davis' "Overture on Australian Themes" tickled the musical imagination of the audience, who closely followed the work's different sections which were based on the progress of Australian life: the settlers, their sea voyage, the animals. It was capped by what many consider to be Australia's national anthem, "Waltzing Matilda," which, the elder Quirit noted in his annotation, was the only waltz scored in a 4/4 meter.

> Two women belonging to musical families prove 'The fruit does not fall far from the tree'

In April, after the Holy Week, the elder Quirit will return to conduct the orchestra in a formal concert at the Meralco Theater.

Enthralling

Another "Jojo," Jonathan Velasco, enthralled the audience as he led the San Miguel chorale in a masterful rendition of favorite love ditties, such as "Night and Day" and "Because of You;" Philippine folksongs, and classic songs like Carl Orff's "O Fortuna" from Carmina Burana.

Ryan Cayabyab, the guru of Philippine pop music who is currently the executive and artistic director of the San Miguel Foundation for the Performing Arts, emceed the program.

It will be an understatement to say that the San Miguel Corporation's ensembles, the Master Chorale and the Philharmonic Orchestra, truly enliven and enrich the local musical scene. We hope they will become a permanent addition to our country's few performing musical ensembles as they make the country's musical life lovelier and exciting.

When one talks about superb symphonic and chorale sounds, the San Miguel Philharmonic Orchestra and the San Miguel Master Chorale easily come to mind. It does not take long for excellent ensembles to become national treasures, which the orchestra and the chorale already are.

At the CCP's Little Theater, Regina Buenaventura, another upcoming major talent, awed her audience in a recital that was capped with a concerto, this time with the Manila Symphony Orchestra II collaborating and Arturo Molina conducting. Buenaventura delighted her listeners with her technical brilliance and keen musicality.

The first part of the program reeled off with collaborating pianist Najib Ismael. Intimacy, which is the ultimate expression of rapport, ruled their collaboration. Familiar pieces such as Mendelssohn's "On Wings of Song" (Auf flugeln des Gesanges), which became the concert's title; Kreisler's "Liebeslied;" Debussy's "Golliwog's Cakewalk;" Ponce's "Estrellita" and Molina's "Hatinggabi" unfolded appealingly.

Tonal insecurity

As in most opening numbers of recitalists, tonal insecurity was audible in Mendelssohn's work. One thought Buenaventura's tone further crumbled in Ponce's "Estrellita" only to realize later that those intriguing dissonances were an integral part of the piece that served as startling bridge to catchy modulations. It did not take much time for Buenaventura to project confidence and poise.

With veteran Najib Ismael on the piano, her rendition went on flowingly. She dished out sweet, feminine tones from her newly acquired violin instrument, the "Nagyvarius," which was said to approximate the sound of the Stradivarius.

In Kreisler's "Sicilienne and Rigaudon," which capped the first part, Buenaventura towered mightily as she unleashed those spinning rhythmic configurations in secure and brilliant tones.

By the time she played the succeeding Saint-Saens opus, the Concerto for Violin and "Orchestra no. 3 in B minor, Op.61," after the interval, she had more fire that she easily conveyed warmth and intensity specifically in the first and last movements. This she again conveyed in Sarasate's "Introduction and Tarantelle" after she rendered tenderly Wieniawski's "Romance," which she dedicated to her mentor, Professor Basilio Manalo, and his wife.

As observed among young talents, the young Buenaventura excelled in pieces that called for technical brilliance. Perhaps this was because she was only 14.

Age certainly becomes a primary factor in determining the ability of an evolving talent. This is not to say that she lacked feeling. Her musicality is excellent. Definitely, she is a talent to watch and we hope she is able to hone her talent abroad.

In developing the talents of our young artists, we commend private corporations that provide generous assistance to them. Many of our musical talents have received patronage or assistance in further honing their talent usually in furthering their education in the first world. In the case of Buenaventura's concert, the Standard Insurance Co., Inc. was lead sponsor, in cooperation with Kamayan and, of course, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. In fact, it was Ernesto T. Echauz, president of the insurance firm, who welcomed the audience.

Award-winners have to live up to expectation

By Pablo Tariman
Contributor

THERE is a new batch of winners of the National Music Competition for Young Artists (Namcya) and, from all indications, they are all quite promising.

But like previous winners, they will either end up performing, teaching or writing, depending on final choices. Their fate will also depend on how they are handled by mentors, parents and promoters and how they are received by the listening public.

Tonight, another Namcya winner, Oliver Salonga (piano category), will debut with the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Ruggero Barbieri.

As the first orchestra rehearsal of the Grieg A Minor Concerto last week will attest, the 16-year-old soloist is not just competent but sensitive as well. It was his first rehearsal with an orchestra, and the boy was visibly excited. How he will fare in tonight's performance is therefore the litmus test whether he is worthy of the Namcya honor and prepared for bigger things ahead.

Obviously, the boy has been getting ready and hasn't rested on his Namcya laurels. He played everywhere—in festivals and outreach concerts in the north, summer music festival in Pasig, concerts in Heritage House and festivals of the Piano Teachers Guild of the Philippines (PTGP). He attended a lot of masterclasses and absorbed what authorities on music had to say. What did he learn from those masterclasses aside from the technical demands of music?

"I learned something very important in those masterclasses," Salonga said. "One of which is that, in order for others to believe in you, you have to believe in yourself as well. And so I learned to be more confident in my playing."

Another debut

This was not the case of another Namcya winner, Regina Buenaventura (violin category), who debuted with the Manila Symphony Orchestra (MSO II) last week under the baton of Arturo Moliha who happens to be her mentor.

In a red fetching dress and playing on a custom-built Nagyvarius violin (this was made by the controversial Dr. Joseph Nagyvary who announced in the 1978 Violin Society of America convention that the quality of materials is more important for the sound of violin than the woodcrafting workmanship making Strads and Guarneri violins unreasonably expensive), the 15-year-old soloist did manage to look radiant but was often weighed down by unease.

Among others, she played Heifetz arrangements of Ponce's "Estrellita" and some Filipino favorites like "Hatinggabi" in the first part pretty much like a first rehearsal. Buenaventura capped the evening as soloist in Saint-Saens B Minor Concerto with the youthful MSO II.

In the first part, Buenaventura managed to project good intonation and even moments of subtle lyricism. However, her uneasiness on stage did not redeem a vapid performance. That she lacked stage exposure—and was not enjoying herself—was obvious.

But in this orchestral debut, she received a generous standing ovation from well-meaning relatives and friends of an insurance company, which sponsored the concert.

What was disconcerting was that there was no trace of the prize-winner in her performance. (We found out later that this was her first solo recital after winning Namcya many years back.) On the whole, the soloist did not lift the spirit of the youthful MSO II, which was fairly competent.

Annoying errors

The most confusing part of the concert, which annoyed musicians in the audience, was the glossy souvenir program riddled with irreparable errors (sample: Golliwogg's Cakewalk was attributed to Antonio Molina and "Hatinggabi" was credited to Antonino Buenaventura). How this escaped the eyes of music consultants of the concert was a big mystery.

The lesson here is that a one-time prize-winner does not become a certified star after a visibly aggressive media blitz (she was on television a few days after that disappointing performance, giving tips on how to be successful and was brazenly being touted as the next Cecile Licad and Lea Salonga, who are not violinists).

PIANIST Oliver Salonga

> The key to a good performance is not having expensive and controversial musical instruments but preparation

Buenaventura has talent worthy of a teacher's attention, but at this phase of her growth, she needs to do more performances and receive more training before she is launched as a star of the violin. Eight hours of daily practice and no public exposure add up to a perfect formula for mishandling a promising talent.

The thing to do now is to help her overcome her annoying stage fright. She should also hone her art away from self-serving compliments.

As it were, there was nothing in the Nagyvarius violin that she used in her Cultural Center of the Philippines debut that made music lovers sit up and take notice.

Whether you have a Strad or an Amador Tamayo violin, the key to a good performance is not having expensive and controversial violins but preparation.

Trumpets lines up 2003 season programs

FOR THE 2003 season, Trumpets is unveiling its own performance venue located on the 5th level of the Shangri-La Plaza Mall.

Aptly called "Stageworx," this multi-purpose space can seat about 300 people and is ideal for seminars, dance classes, rehearsals, small corporate events, trade shows, parties, church services, graduation ceremonies, as well as all forms of performances—recitals, experimental works, one man shows, readings, small plays, musical revues and cabaret acts. Trumpets will produce a merry mix of plays, intimate musicals, concerts and productions for kids and teenagers.

Stageworx is open to the public for rental.

Playshop, Trumpets' multi-media summer workshop, will mark its 10th anniversary with a grand celebration. New courses like animation, photography for kids, hosting, stand-up comedy and technical theater will be added to its already diverse curriculum. Playshop will be very accessible with branches in Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Festival Mall in Alabang, Steps Studio in Pasong Tamo Extension and Bayview International Towers on Roxas Blvd. And to accommodate the many requests for classes beyond summer, Playshop has set up a new Music Department which will offer voice and instrument playing classes year round.

Come July, Trumpets will begin its foray into children's musical theater with an original musical called "Noah's Big Boat." This innovative show based on the Noah's Ark story will incorporate black theater, actors and dancers, giant puppets and the many voices of Gary Valenciano. This will run at the Music Museum.

As a follow up to its box office hits "Little Mermaid" and "The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe," Trumpets will stage "Honk," a contemporary musical adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen's "The Ugly Duckling." "Honk" won Best Musical at the Lawrence Olivier Awards in London beating "The Lion King" and "Mama Mia." "Honk" will run inAugust and September at the Meralco Theater.

Trumpets also plans a huge Christmas extravaganza in December. Inquiries about Stageworx, Playshop, "Noah's Big Boat," "Honk" and the Christmas show may be directed to the Trumpets office, 6th level, parking lot entrance, Shangri-La Plaza Mall. Call 636-2842 or 633-5010.

THE CAST of "Mula sa Pusod... (Pababa!)"

Sex comedy to raise funds for actors' education

By Cora Llamas
Contributor

MULA sa Pusod... (Pababa!)" may be a ticklish sex comedy appealing to our funny bone and prurient interest, but the cause it champions touches on weighty issues in the performing arts.

The first major theater production of the Actors Workshop Foundation (AWF) intends to raise funds for its educational programs, including acting workshops, scholarship programs, teacher trainings and outreach activities. The AWF is a non-stock, nonprofit organization composed of professional actors who seek to provide continuing education and training to their colleagues.

Pinoy actors may be among the most natural, the most emotive, and expressive in the world, but the need for progressive training can't be ignored.

The AWF knows whereof it speaks; some of its illustrious members include stage and screen luminaries such as Laurice Guillen, Johnny Delgado, Gina Alajar, Michael de Mesa and Armida Siguion-Reyna.

"Pusod" is a labor of love for the actors involved. Director Leo Martinez and cast members Gina Alajar, Anna Marin, Rez Cortez, Toby Alejar, Geoffrey Eigenmann and the other members of the ensemble are waiving their usual talent fees to help cut production costs and thus turn up a profit for their cause.

Martinez traces his roots to the theater. He started out in Repertory Philippines, where he performed the Philippine stage's definitive version of Salieri in "Amadeus."

But the man does not want to rest on his laurels. "We [actors] are all playing it by ear or *oido*, though we've had 75 years of cinema. We suggest that actors be trained professionally. *Marami pa tayong magagawa. Malayo pa tayo sa* international scene. Look at our soap operas—the acting is all the same. What if *pag-aralan pa natin at baka makita natin kung paano pa natin maaabot ang gusto nating patunguhan?*"

Contradictory

He points out the differences in performing for the movies and for theater. "The two mediums can be contradictory. The stage needs tension, but in film, there should be [none]. Film needs relaxation and the actors show this. That's why some stage-to-TV actors tend to overact."

One of the core philosophies that the foundation teaches and lives by is the Eric Morris School of "no acting."

"Acting and real-life are [connected]," says Martinez in a way that can be summarized as S.A.R.E.—for stimulus, affect, respond and express.

"Acting is feeling and expressing those feelings. All of us feel, but not all of us can express it. If you cannot express those feelings, then you can't act. That's why we call it 'no acting, please': it is what you feel that you simply express."

The AWF regularly conducts weekend classes for established, rising and wannabe actors. The outspoken, no-holds barred actor has also expanded his wings, helping younger comedians birth their own group acts and formulating a "wholesome kind of stand-up" comedy for family-friendly theater companies like Trumpets.

Martinez discourages the "crash-course" style of tutoring an actor solo.

"A crash course defeats the purpose of the workshop," he says bluntly. "*Sa acting, hinahanap mo ang* interaction. You can't act alone—that's masturbation."

Which brings us to the subject matter of his present play.

Translated by Angela Stuart-Santiago from Joe Orton's "What the Butler Saw," "Pusod" is described as a sex comedy of errors revolving around a psychiatric clinic for the rich and famous. The amorous Dr. Manibog (Toby Alejar and Rez Cortez alternating) performs every trick in the book to hide his lovely soon-to-be-secretary, whom he's courting, from his socialite wife (Alajar and Marin alternating). Naturally, all his bright ideas fail.

The confusion is further complicated by a bellboy (Eigenmann and Rvee Reyes alternating) blackmailing Ms Manibog, a government doctor (Martinez) inspecting the clinic for irregularities, and a policeman (Sonny Alcantara) whose investigation makes everyone's life miserable.

In his usual candor, Martinez makes no bones about its material. "It's purely entertainment," he says.

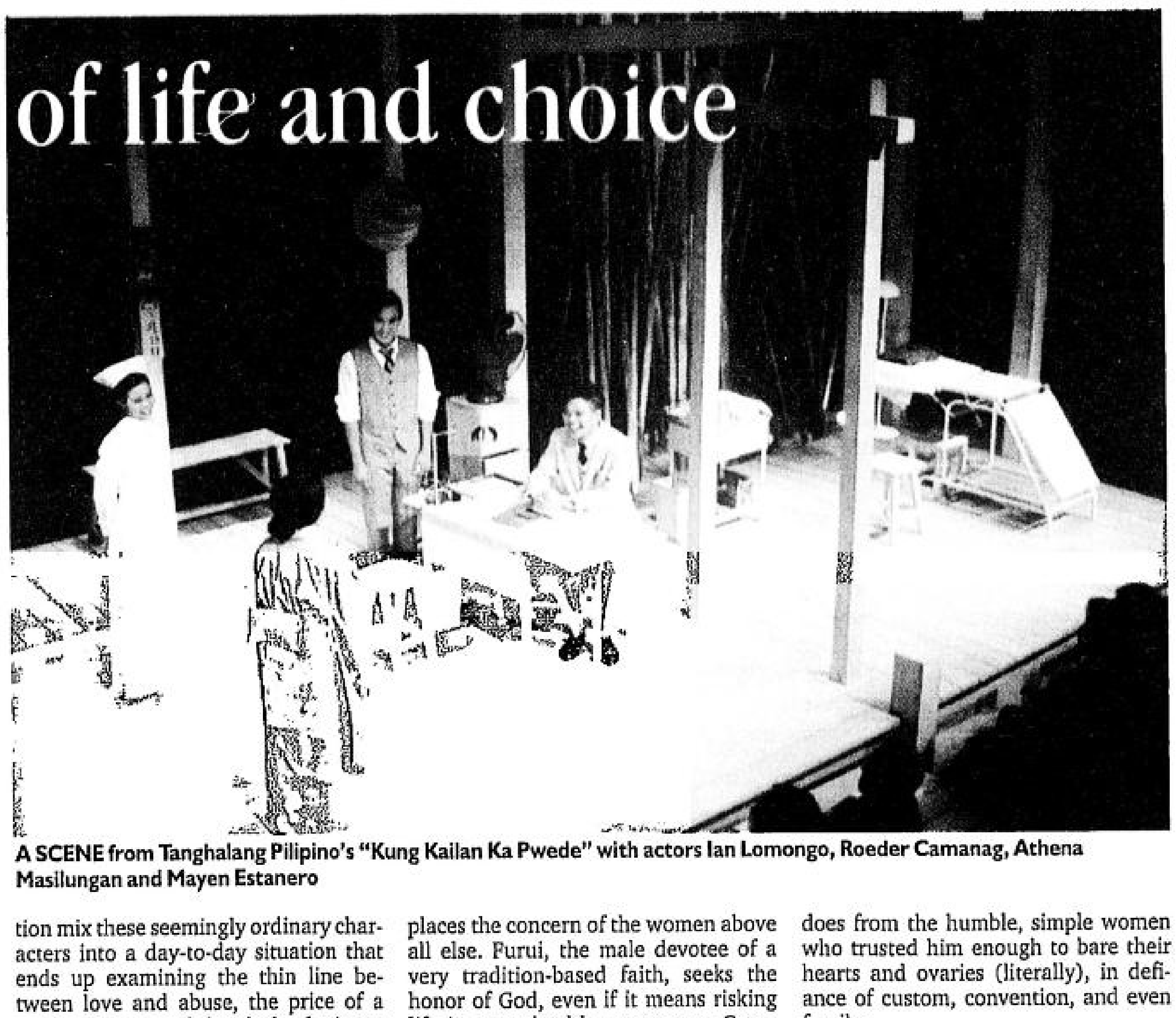
"Mula sa Pusod [pababa!]" is now running at the Music Museum on weekends until March 15. Call 723-2297 or 412-2576.

TOBY Alejar, Gina Alajar and Leo Martinez

PHOTO BY JOHNNY VILLENA

'KUNG KAILAN KA PWEDE'

A matter of life and choice



A SCENE from Tanghalang Pilipino's "Kung Kailan Ka Pwede" with actors Ian Lomongo, Roeder Camanag, Athena Masilungan and Mayen Estanero

AT FIRST glance, Tanghalang Pilipino's "Kung Kailan Ka Pwede" doesn't appear like a laugh-a-second robust comedy. The plot—the day-to-day chronicles of a provincial doctor on a difficult medical research—is a little thin, tedious and may even be a little too technical.

REVIEW

The themes certainly are complex and too "heavy": birth control, women's rights, religious beliefs, and even abortion. Plus, there's no villain, comic foil, or humorous device that can throw the characters and the audience into one expected tailspin.

But, thanks to a snappy, streetwise, and sensitive translation by Rody Vera (from the original Japanese of Jijima Sanae and Suzuki Yumi) and engaging, charming acting by the ensemble, the material hits the audience at their funny bone. Pretty soon, we're all laughing out of the aisles.

The research on the actual timing of ovulation, which the historical Ogino Kyuaski (Ian Lomongo) discovered in the 1920s, becomes simply a tool to get into the lives of the more interesting people that visit his clinic. The internal conflicts, interpersonal dynamics, and interaction of doctors and patients alike are so ridiculously real as the foibles of your next-door neighbor. And yet so intimate as the life-changing decisions that we make.

Lomongo is aptly quiet and insecure as the brainy *torpe* of a doctor who has an easier time dissecting a woman's ovary than wooing her heart. Angela Altomonte brings the house down as the warm-hearted, naughty, nosy mother who's now on her nth pregnancy.

Mayen Estenero's barren Nomura and Tess Jamias as Ogino's dutiful, naïve wife Tome are both touching and exasperating as the ladies whose lives revolve around their husbands'.

Vera's script and Herbie Go's direction mix these seemingly ordinary characters into a day-to-day situation that ends up examining the thin line between love and abuse, the price of a mother's love, and the clash of science and superstition and tradition.

The creative team knows when to pull their punches, tweak the audience's collective sense of humor, or tug at their heartstrings.

Polarity

The intellectual polarity in the production is represented by the beautiful iceberg of a feminist nurse Yoriko (Athena Masilungan) and the "Bible-boy" med assistant Furui (Roeder Camanag).

It was inevitable that Yoriko and Furui would clash like cats and dogs. Yoriko, a modern woman at a time when her values and beliefs would be deemed scandalous and heretical, places the concern of the women above all else. Furui, the male devotee of a very tradition-based faith, seeks the honor of God, even if it means risking life in an unhealthy pregnancy. Guess which side of the fence these two would find themselves today?

It is obvious where the sympathies of the play lie. Yoriko does make a good case for her cause, ending with an impassioned revelation that shows that the ice queen has a heart after all.

Furui, without equal space and time, is not given enough motivation; his principles tend to appear as well-meaning and benevolent, but impractical. It's only Roeder's projection of benevolence and compassion, with no small amount of boyish charm, which saves the part. A less capable actor could have made Furui look like a dogmatic jerk.

What's important is that the genius Ogino learns from his assistants. As he does from the humble, simple women who trusted him enough to bare their hearts and ovaries (literally), in defiance of custom, convention, and even family.

Though he won international fame and honor for uncovering the secrets of ovulation, what Ogino takes into his spirit is more priceless: the sanctity of human life and the right of free choice.

Pro-choice and pro-life proponents tend to see the debate as an either/or scenario. Somehow, Ogino's education weaves the two points of view together into one illuminating whole, and the researcher who started off as a cold champion of medical science transforms into a compassionate humanist. It becomes a wonderful journey, too, for the audience.

Cora Llamas

Dramatis Personae stages gender-bending play

A SON breaks down and confesses his father's sexual abuse. A severely battered woman chooses to remain with her lesbian lover for love. A gay seminarian finally decides to leave his vocation out of respect for his church. A lesbian is having a clandestine affair with her sister-in-law. A gay banker is wrongly accused of sexual harassment and fired from work.

A unique gender-bending mobile lounge act that speaks from the honest hearts of members of the third sex, "Lesbian Diaries, Gay Memoirs" will once again be unplugged at the Culture Club on E. Rodriguez Avenue, Libis, QC, on Feb. 20, 10 p.m. The production was premiered to acclaim at the La Dida Bar in Malate in October.

Featuring seasoned actors from the legitimate stage/television and film—Dingdong Rosales, Marjorie Borgofia, Angie Baesa, Andre Torres, Abigail Aquino, Vida Villalba and Joseph Lara—with script cowritten by Lito Casaje and the cast, staged managed by Rod Quinto, light designed by Roderick Manzan, conceived and directed by Casaje, this lounge is interactive.

There will be a no-holds-barred, open-mike discussion after the performance, concerning specific issues dramatized in the theater piece, with Casaje and the performers as provocateurs.

Storytellers and would-be letter-senders who are willing to openly share their true-to-life gender-bending experiences, revolving around their loves and lives, trials and travails, cheers and frustrations, are welcome.

Auditionees who would like to act out their own personal experiences onstage are also welcome to audition after the performance. They should also bring along with them their resumé with an attached 2"x2" photo.

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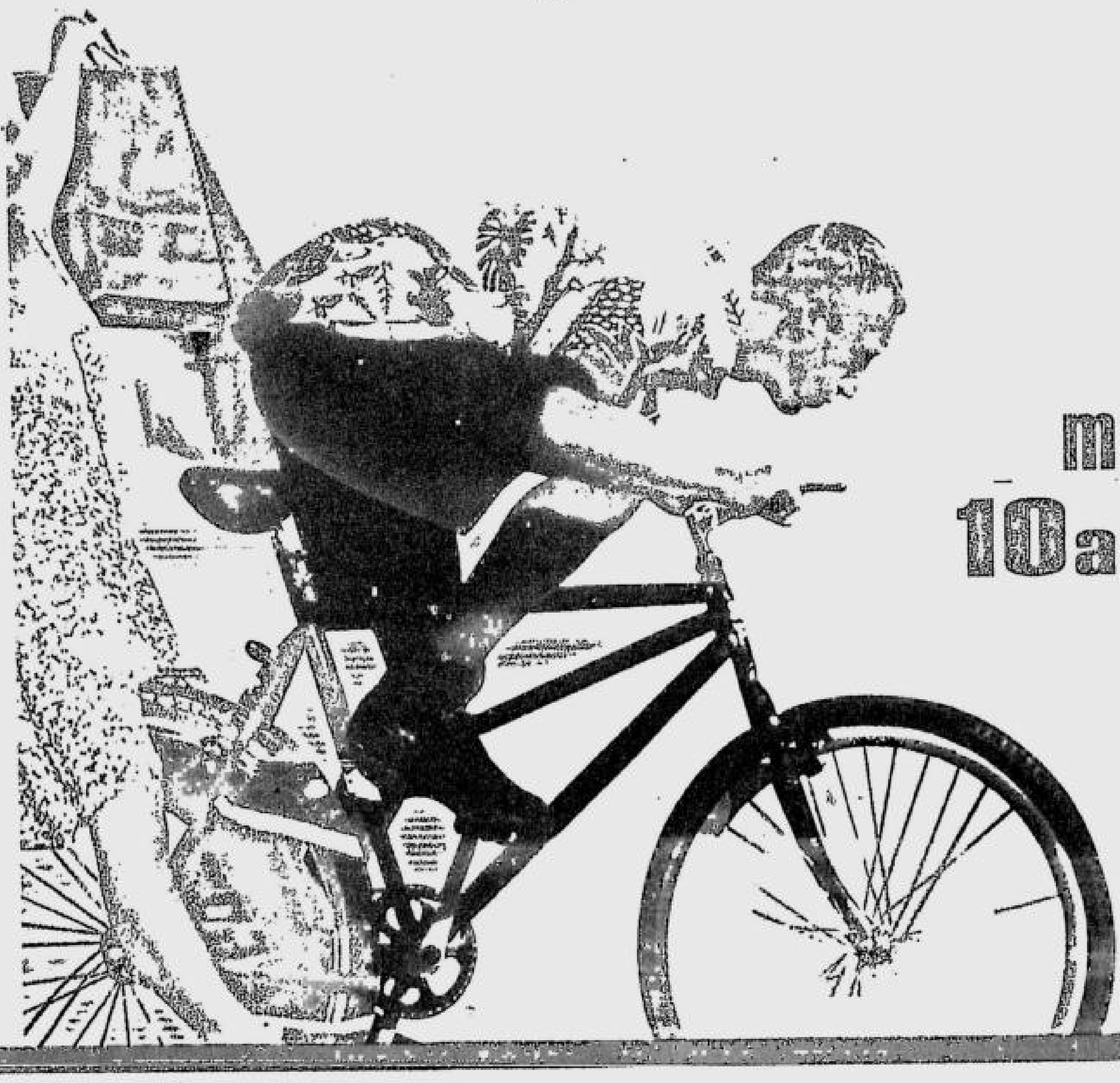

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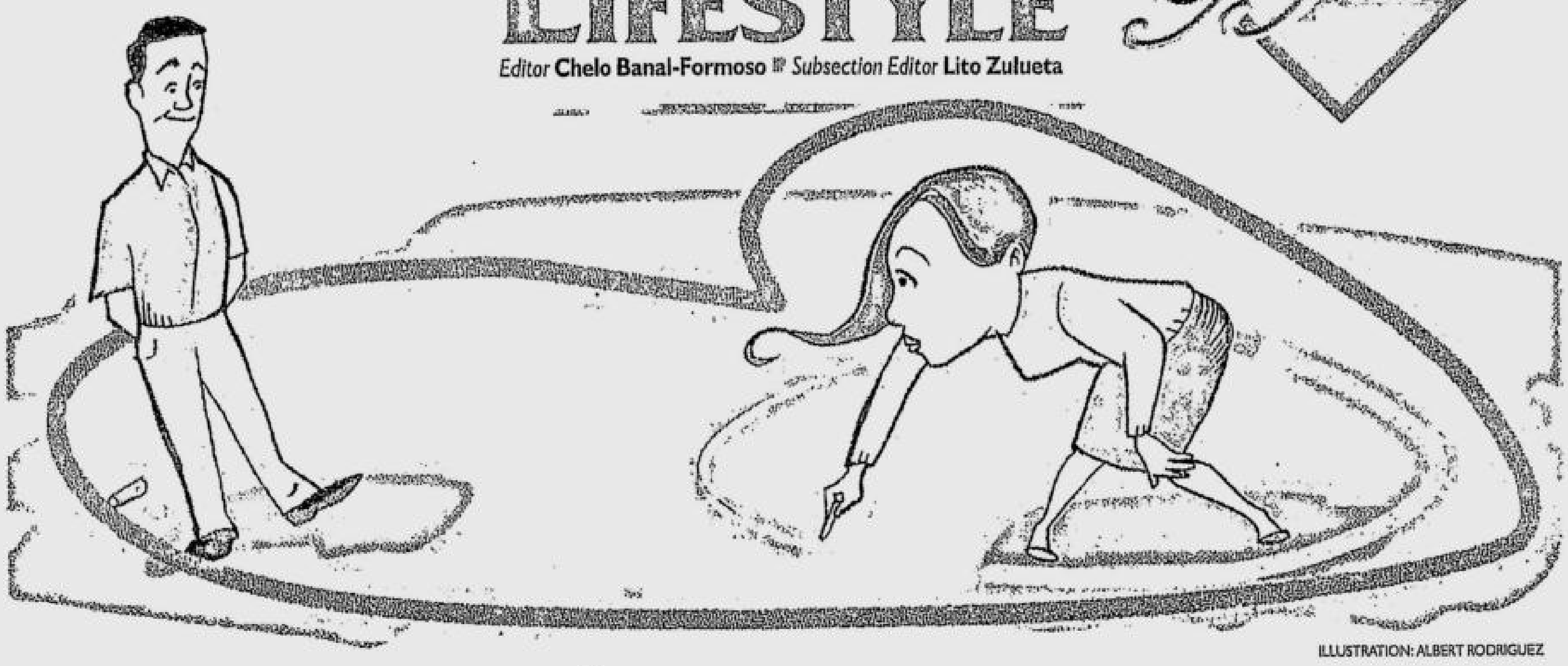

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Days of passion, nights of ardor

By Cristina B. Gomez
Contributor

"LOVE is too short, forgetting too long," goes the oft-repeated Pablo Neruda line, but when it comes to word-for-word recollection of one's favorite love passage from literature, forgetting is often easy. At the recent launch of "Days of Disquiet, Nights of Rage," the new edition by Anvil Publishing of Jose "Pete" Lacaba's famous book, we found a rare few who were able to recite to us their favorite romantic quotes.

Raul Roco
former senator and education secretary

You drew a line around you to keep me out, and so I drew a line around the whole thing to keep you in.—from "The Norton Anthology of Poetry"

Jing Panganiban
television journalist

Huwag ka sanang magagalit
Huwag ka sanang maiilang
Kung aking sasabihin
Na tuwing humihinga ako
Naaamoy kita
Na tuwing pumipikit ako
Ikaw ang nagiging umaga.
—by Rayvi Sunico

Vim Nadera
teacher, poet and performance artist

Mahal na ang de-lata
Mahal pa'ng abrelata;
Minamahal kong sinta,
Nagmahal ka na rin ba?
— from his own writing

Michael Coroza
teacher, poet and 'kundiman' lover

Tag-ulan ang panahon
Ng ating pagmamahal
Basa at mapag-ampon
Ang lupang binubungkal.
— from Coroza's own "Tag-ulan"

Bienvenido Lumbera
Ramon Magsaysay laureate

Western wind, when wilt thou blow
The small rain down can rain
God, that my love were in my arms
And I in my bed again.
—ancient anonymous English poem

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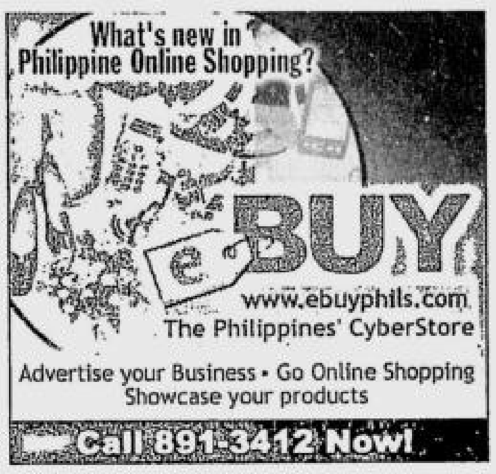
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Books for the Barrios, IT experts, engineers help public schools

By Butch Hernandez
Contributor

IN 1981, Dan and Nancy Harrington founded the Books for the Barrios project in the Philippines. They began by distributing 180,000 lbs of books and reading materials that had come from various donors in the US to public schools in Negros province.

Today, Books for the Barrios Inc. plays a major role in promoting quality education in poor schools and developing countries.

Last January, Nancy Harrington met with Eugenia Apostol of the Education Revolution movement, a multisectoral initiative to qualitatively upgrade Philippine public schools.

Water firm adopts Balara school

In 2001, a group of employees of the Manila Water Company volunteered their resources, time and energy to help Lingap sa Mag-aaral, a corporate community-development program with the students of the Balara Elementary School.

The Balara school was a natural choice, as it was within the vicinity of the Balara Filtration Plant where the Manila Water Company has its offices.

Ramon De Leon, group director for human resources and corporate services, said that Lingap aims to instill positive civic values among children through resource speakers who may serve as role models. The program also holds educational field trips and tree-planting activities.

De Leon said that last year volunteers conducted lectures for Grades 5 and 6 students on environment topics such as water conservation, solid waste management and sewerage and sanitation.

The volunteers also gave math and science tutorials to Grade 6 students to prepare them for their entrance exams at the Philippine and Quezon City Science High Schools. The volunteers also held value formation and catechism classes.

De Leon said that this year Lingap aimed to adopt six more schools.

Angeles University adopts school

The Education Revolution's regional base in Central Luzon at the Angeles University Foundation adopted the Enrica Sandico Elementary School in Barangay Maligaya, Pulung Maragul, Angeles City.

The project started Jan. 7, combining the efforts of the AUF's College of Engineering Alumni Association, the student council, the PTA of the Enrica Sandico Elementary School, and the faculty and staff of the College of Engineering led by Dean Lilia Austriaco.

The AUF CE has prepared a four-point priority adoption plan. Initially, it will provide for potable water and library and repair the plumbing system.

Austriaco said that the water and plumbing system project cost P100,000 with the proponents supplying materials, labor and services. She added that the Civil Engineering Department and the CE alumni would spearhead the construction of the library within the year.

Parañaque school gets new 'pal'

Under the Partners in Active Learning Support (PALS) program, volunteer employees of Litigation Direct Inc. (LDI) went to Rivera Village Elementary School in Parañaque late last year to donate 20 computers and help the students raise their computer literacy and proficiency.

LDI is a wholly owned subsidiary of SPI Technologies, Inc., an IT firm.

Lucy Aguila, chief administrative officer, said that school principal Roland Soriano had already set up a study area which he hoped to convert into a computer room. With PALS, his dream came true.

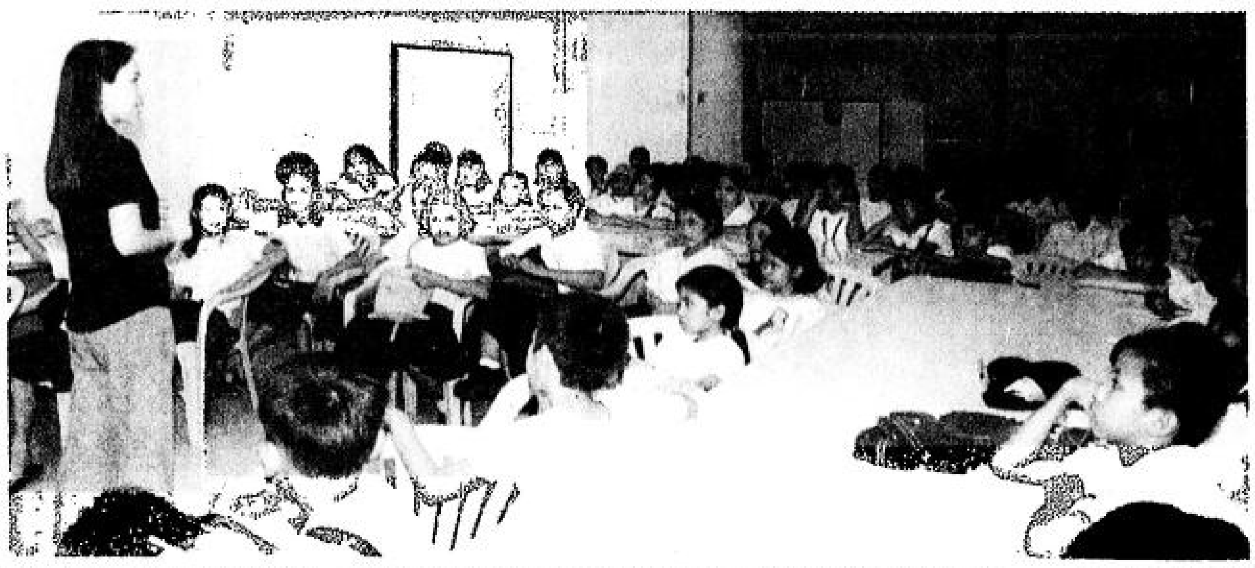
All PALS volunteers have teaching backgrounds. Since July, they have been conducting morning and afternoon classes three times a week for about 300 Grades 5 and 6 pupils.

Another SPI subsidiary, the Scholarly Publishers Services Inc, (SPS), launched the Sama-Samang Iangat Kinabukasan at Pangkabuhayan (Sikap), a skills-building program for special children enrolled at the SPED center of the Jose Rizal Elementary School in Pasay City.

Yolanda Javier, principal of Jose Rizal Elementary School, said that special children needed to acquire a measure of economic independence, so they needed to have livelihood skills by the time they would leave the SPED center.

SPS general manager Paul Hartley and the SPS Labor Management Council launched Sikap last June as a community-relations program and designated former LMC vice chairman Darius Caasi to run it.

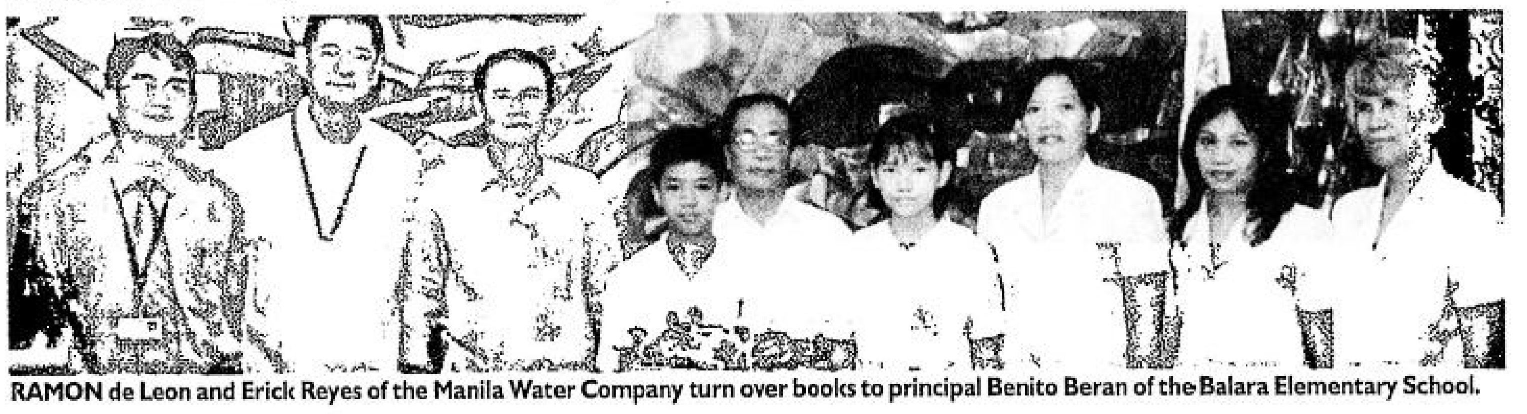
SIKAP has donated books and computers to the SPED center and conducted reading proficiency, computer literacy and livelihood seminars for the special children.



MANILA Water Company volunteer lectures on solid waste management before Grade 5 students.

RAMON de Leon and Ding Carpio of the Manila Water Company turn over computer units to faculty of Balara school.

NANCY Harrington of Books for the Barrios is in town. A welcome dinner was hosted by Dean Jorge Bocobo (above) for her. For the past 20 years, she has been shipping container vans full of books to the Philippines for the use of public school students.



RAMON de Leon and Erick Reyes of the Manila Water Company turn over books to principal Benito Beran of the Balara Elementary School.

Museum Foundation hosts dinner and jazz concert

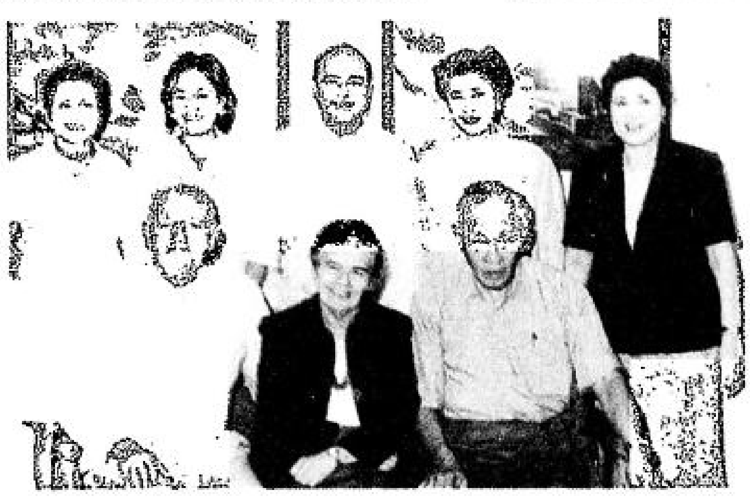
ON FEB. 16, the Museum Foundation of the Philippines (MFP) will host a dinner at the National Museum Quadrangle on Finance Road and off P. Burgos Street in Manila to celebrate the fifth anniversary of its relocation to its permanent site.

The fund-raising event will also pay tribute to former President Fidel V. Ramos, who was responsible for returning the former Senate Building to the National Museum after nearly 100 years and endowing it with two other buildings, including the former Finance Building on the Agrifina Circle.

The MFP is the leading organization of Museum friends. It is headed by Maria Isabel Ongpin.

The celebration will feature a jazz event, with the Executives Band and former First Lady Amelita "Ming" Ramos as guest pianist. It will introduce new jazz talent Mishka Arellano Adams and classicist Ding Basbas.

JAZZ artist Mishka Arellano Adams



MEMBERS of the Museum Foundation. Seated from left: Bob Lane, Maribel Ongpin, and Amando Doronila. Standing: Nina Yuson, Tata Poblador, Virgil Reyes, Cynthia Pastor and Maritess Pineda

THE EXECUTIVE Band with former First Lady Amelita Ramos

Magsaysay student essay contest now open

THE RAMON Magsaysay Awards Foundation is now accepting entries to the 3rd Ramon Magsaysay Student Essay Competition. Contest theme is "Inspiring Me to Make a Difference: Personal Lessons From AaMagsaysay Awardee."

The contest encourages the writing of profiles on winners of the Ramon Magsaysay Awards, which have recognized since 1958 the accomplishments of Asians in community leadership, government service, international understanding, public service, journalism, literature and creative communication arts. Recently the Awards have added a new category—emergent leadership.

Contestants may consult with various sources to write the profiles. Many school libraries nationwide are repositories of RMAF publications, such as "The Book of Record," a 10-volume compilation of the biographies of the award winners from 1958 to 1991, and the "Book of Citations," an anthology of the official commendations to the award winners until 1999.

Just off the press are the "2002 Book of Citations" and its CD version, which incorporate all the official commendations to date. The two latest RMAF productions are offered at discounted rates of P200 and P100, respectively.

Entries are classified into regional clusters: National Capital Region, Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. From each cluster, one collegiate and one high-school finalist will be selected. The two national winners (high school and collegiate) will be selected from the eight regional finalists.

All entries must be original, written in English, with an estimated length of 2-4 pages or 500-1,000 words in length. Deadline for submission is on July 15, 2003.

Entries may be forwarded to the following chairpersons of the regional boards:

NCR: Erlita P. Mendoza, Centre for Inter-Cultural Studies, 5/F Central Library, University of Sto. Tomas, España Blvd., Manila; telefax (02) 740-9716; e-mail: erlipm@angelfire.com.

Luzon: Elvira S. Balinas, Department of English, College of Arts and Science, Angeles University Foundation, Angeles City, Pampanga; tel. (045) 888-2663 to 65, local 712; e-mail levbalinas@hotmail.com.

Visayas: Leoncio P. Deriada, 214 San Jose St., Molo, Iloilo City 5000; tel. (033) 338-0268.

Mindanao: Luzviminda C. Ilagan, Mass Communication Department, Ateneo de Davao University, Davao City; telefax (082) 227-2262; e-mail ilagan@dctech.com.ph.

Prizes include P100,000 each for the national winners, and a personal computer for each of the eight regional finalists and their respective schools.

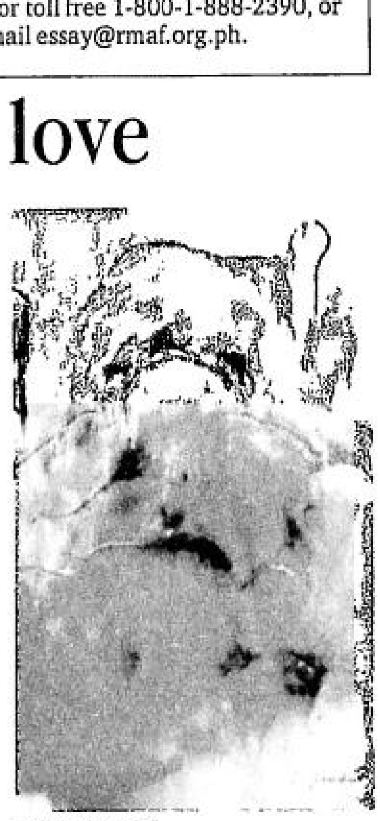
Major partners of the RMAF are Hewlett-Packard Philippines, BPI Foundation Inc., Nestlé Philippines and PLDT. Special sponsor is Shoemart.

Contact the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation at 521-3166 to 85 or toll free 1-800-1-888-2390, or e-mail essay@rmaf.org.ph.

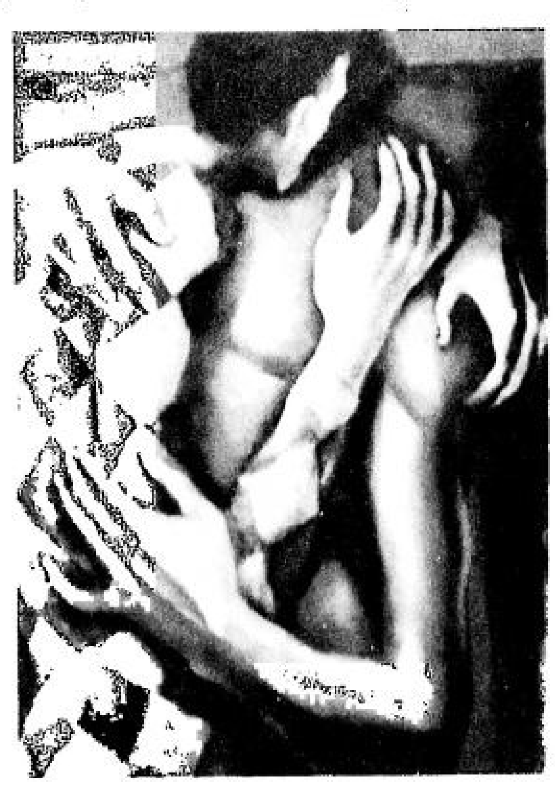
Exhibit pays homage to love

THE EXHIBIT "Hommage a L'Erotisme et L'Amour" pays tribute to eroticism and the art of love through 35 works by Cesar Legaspi, Romulo Olazo, Raul Lebajo, Raul Isidro, Pandy Aviado, Egai Fernandez, Gig de Pio, Lydia Velasco, Marcel Antonio, Jack Teotico, Dominic Rubio, Carlo Saavedra, Edwin Tres Reyes, Gino Tioseco, Offy Garcia and Poch Naval.

"L'Erotisme" opens at 7 p.m. on Feb. 14 and runs until Feb. 26 at the Galerie Joaquin 371 corner P. Guevarra St. and Montessori Lane, Addition Hills, San Juan. Preview of works on Feb. 13. Call 723-9253.



"SEA of Red"



"THE KISS"

They came in Manchester United jerseys

IT WAS another superb night at the movies for film buffs and arts enthusiasts as Shangri-La Plaza and the British Council opened the British Film Festival at the mall's Cinema 1 with the screening of the British smash hit, "Bend It Like Beckham."

The affair was graced by members of the British community here headed by British Ambassador to the Philippines Paul Dimond, as well as local cineastes and art lovers. Guests, some of them wearing jerseys of Mancheser United, David Beckham's club, partook of a sumptuous cocktail hosted by Juan Miguel Ongsiako's Struan & Tang's Tea House on the mall's fourth level before trooping to the cinema for the screening.

GILL Westaway, Ambassador Paul Dimond and Lala Fojas

Seen enjoying the delectable fare were Claude and Elfie Monange of the Austrian Embassy, Geoff Wain of British Embassy, the British Ambassador's wife Caroline Dimond, Hamilton and Sarah Mcloed, Joost Van Moorter and Ingmar Dekegel, Frank Black and Micky Janns.

Other guests were Belgian film critic Jergen and Christine Vergeylen, Wendy Duncan and Banta Stephen of Asian Development Bank, Debbie Clarke of Trade Partners UK.

British Council Arts and PR head Susan Arcega, who hosted the program, cited the role played by Shangri-La Plaza in starting a trend for mall-based film festivals in the country.

British Ambassador Dimond called the festival, which was part of the UK Fortnight celebration (which included an education fair, a food festival and literary readings) a place "where art and science meet, to raise our spirits, educate us and provide an escapist opportunity."

CORA Espiritu and son Noel

British Council director Gill Westaway said the films in the festival reflected the British Council's conscious decision to present the increasing multiculturalism of the UK and expressed the hope that this year's choice of films provide viewers with a good cross-section of the British film industry.

In its mandate to broaden and build international audiences for British talent, the British Council, in future festivals, will expand its presentations to documentaries, student films, experimental video and outstanding works for TV and wide screen from the British Broadcasting Corporation, she said.

SEC. Mona Valisno

"Bend It Like Beckham" was a hit at last year's Cannes Film Festival. It is the story of two young girls, one of them of Indian descent, who dream of playing professional soccer, and the obstacles that come their way in pursuing the dream. It provides a glimpse of contemporary, multicultural Britain.

Other films in the festival shown were "Born Romantic," "Divorcing Jack," "Last Resort" and "Love and Death on Long Island."

MAOU Rosal

INSPIRATIONAL and transformational author George Sison will have a series of book-signing books for his "A Miracle Awaits You" on Feb. 15 at National Book Store Shangri-La Plaza; Feb. 22 at NBS Glorietta; and March 1 at NBS Quezon Avenue.

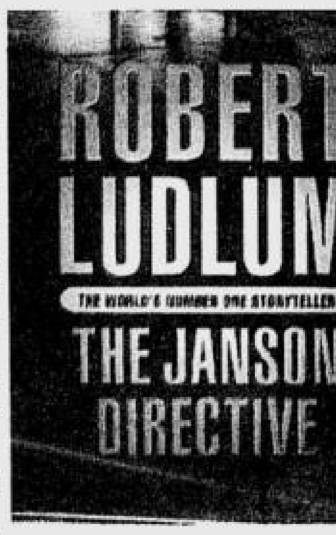
Recommended fictional reads

POWERBOOKS recommends the following titles for fiction aficionados:

"The Janson Directive" by Robert Ludlum

Ludlum is, of course, the best-selling thriller writer of all time, having sold more than 200 million copies of his 22 novels, and he has become known for the sweep and intricacy of his plots... Ludlum transcends the genre.—**New Yorker**

The pace is fast, the action plentiful... A must-read.—**Booklist**



"Great Expectations" by Charles Dickens

"Great Expectations" is at once a superbly constructed novel of spellbinding mystery and a profound examination of moral values. Written at a time when Dickens' view of Victorian society had grown especially dark, this novel is peopled by characters bearing the author's unmistakable stamp. The orphan Pip, the convict Magwitch, the beautiful Estella, and her guardian, the embittered and vengeful Miss Havisham, the strangely ambiguous figure of the master lawyer Mr. Jaggers—all play their part in a story whose very title reflects the deep irony that shaped Dickens' searching reappraisal of the Victorian middle class.

"The Gangster of Love" by Jessica Hagedorn

Rocky Rivera arrives in the US from the Philippines the year that Jimi Hendrix dies. So begins a blazing coming-of-age story suffused with the tensions of immigration that finds Rocky moving from the counterculture of 1960s San Francisco to the extravagant 1980s Manhattan music scene.

"Kitchen" by Banana Yoshimoto

Love, death, mourning and the gradual recovery of the will to live are staple themes in fiction. But they receive a delightfully fresh expression in Kitchen... A beautifully understated work.—**New York Newsday**

"The Body Artist" by Don DeLillo

For 30 years since the publication of his first novel, "Americana," Don DeLillo has lived in the skin of our times. He has found a voice for the forgotten souls who haunt the fringes of our culture and for its larger-than-life, real-life figures. His language is defiantly, radiantly American.

Now, to a new century, he has brought "The Body Artist." In this spare, seductive novel, he inhabits the muted world of Lauren Hartke, an artist whose work defies the limits of the body. Lauren is living on a lonely coast in a rambling rented house, where she encounters a strange, ageless man, a man with uncanny knowledge of her own life. Together they begin a journey into the wilderness of time, love and human perception. "The Body Artist" is a haunting, beautiful, and profoundly moving novel from one of the finest writers of our time.

Dumaguete National Writers Workshop now accepting applications

NATIONAL Artist for Literature Edith L. Tiempo, director of the National Writers Workshop held for three weeks every summer in Dumaguete City, has announced that applications for fellowships are now being accepted, with Feb. 28 as the deadline for submission.

Young writers and poets are enjoined to send 3 to 6 short stories and/or 8 to 12 poems together with their biodata, a 2x2-inch photo, an application letter for fellowship, a letter of recommendation, and a letter of authentication from a faculty member regarding the submitted manuscripts.

Manuscripts should be sent as both hardcopy and in diskette, preferably in Aldus PM5 or MS Word.

The application packet should be mailed to Dr. Edith L. Tiempo, Director, National Writers Workshop, c/o CAP Bldg, Rizal Boulevard, 6200 Dumaguete City.

This year's summer workshop, the 42nd edition of the longest-running creative writing workshop in Asia, will be held from May 5 to 23.

A fellowship includes lodging, a modest stipend, and one-way fare reimbursement. Traditionally helping Dr. Tiempo in the conduct of the workshop are rotating panels made up of the most notable writers in the country.

PWU marks 83rd year

THE MONTH-LONG foundation anniversary celebration of the Philippine Women's University, which is entering its 83rd year, will kick off with the visit of Our Lady of Manaoag in Manila on Feb. 10-12.

Dr. Helena Z. Benitez, chair of the PWU board of trustees, said that the visit of the Our Lady of the Rosary of Manaoag expects to bring off a massive prayer rally for divine intervention for the grace of world peace.

The miraculous image is scheduled to arrive at the outskirts of the metropolis at 10 a.m. on Monday, Feb. 10, and will be met at the Balintawak toll gate by a welcoming party led by PWU vice-president Noel Benitez and alumni relations director Linda Chincuanco.

The cavalcade will then proceed to the PWU campus along Taft Avenue, where the university community will be gathered to welcome the holy image at the school's Leon Guinto gate.

Rev. Fr. Sonny Ramirez, the Our Lady of Manaoag parishioners' representative who will accompany the image, will give the entrustment speech. The image will be installed at the University chapel.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and Dr. Benitez will deliver the welcome remarks, to be followed by an acceptance speech and prayer to be led by incoming PWU president Dr. Amelou Benitez Reyes.

At 6 p.m., the Bayanihan Folk Arts Foundation led by its chair, Ambassador Alfonso Yuchengco, will sponsor a holy Mass at the chapel, to be officiated by Fr. Saturnino L. Pilotos Jr., with music from the PWU Workers of Christ Choir.

On Feb. 11-12, PWU will open its campus to visiting schools, colleges and universities to hold vigil with Our Lady in the chapel. On Feb. 11, a Mass will be said at 6:40 p.m., with music by the PWU Chapel Choir led by Benitez Biyo.

A farewell Mass will be held at noon on Feb. 12. It will be co-celebrated by Fr. John Brannigan, Father Ramirez and Father Pilotos.

The National Arts Month across the nation

Feb. 10

BUKAMBIBIG sa UP (Feb 10-14) University of the Philippines-Diliman—Activities include essay and poetry writing contests, poetry reading, exhibit and cultural presentation. Contact Vladimir Gonzales, 922-1830.

OLIVER Salonga with the Philharmonic Orchestra, 7:30 p.m., CCP Little Theater—A special outreach concert featuring the two-time Namcya first-prize winner with the celebrated PPO. Contact CCP, 832-1125.

MARIS ti Biag, 2 p.m., Laoag City—A dance parade of Ilocano rituals and indigenized Catholic rites such as pannakayanak (birth), buniag (baptism), panagkasangay (birthday), paskua ti Ilocos (Christmas in Ilocandia), fiesta, guling-guling (Lent), tapa (serenade), panagkasar (wedding), atang (offering), and dung-aw panagtabon (death). Contact Linda, 773-1676/ 772-0001 local 204.

IBA'T Ibang Kamay, Iisang Buhay... Filipino! De La Salle Lipa City, Batangas—Weave colorful mats, paint pots, listen to grandma's sweet lullabies and have fun rediscovering the beauty of Filipino culture in this traveling exhibit . Sponsored by the NCCA. Contact Museong Pambata, 523-1797/98.

Feb. 11

PISTA Sintura (Feb. 11-15)—Celebration of Cotabato City's 3rd Pista ng Sining at Kultura. Featuring Maguindanao's colorful dance and music traditions, an exhibit of *malong*, and Kadsayangan, an ethno-modern dance training workshop by Mindanao artist Agnes Locsin. Contact Wilfred Yee, (064) 421-2221.

SALIMBAYAN sa Tayabas (Feb 11-22) Tayabas, Quezon—A collaboration of various Tayabas arts organizations. Activities include arts and crafts parade and contest for school children, street painting, tour of ecclesiastical arts and architecture, piano concert tribute to Tayabasin poets, musicians and artists, a painting contest, arts and crafts fair, and poetry reading. Contact Ryan Palad, (042) 793-8174.

LIDONG sa Kabihug: Pagkilala at Pagpapakilala sa Paniniwala ng mga Katutubo sa Camarines Norte (Feb. 11-28), Camarines Norte—A multimedia traveling exhibit of the rituals of the Kabihug tribe for the bereaved. The exhibit includes a butukan house of the Kabihugs, bamboo benches, write-ups, audio tapes and video footages of the dance and sakdo (food offering) for the dead. Contact Sarah Aviado, (054) 731-1525.

SUBA Pairaya, Suba Paliuod (Pagtultol sa Magkalain-lain nga mga Dalan), Feb 11-28, Calbayog City—A month-long celebration featuring bandilyo, performances of the Hadang, live diorama, competitions on solo guitar, siday and sabayang bigkas, museum exhibits and lectures, art installation, poetry reading and launching of D. Pangero's "My August Moon," a Chito Roño film retrospective, serenade of old Samar songs, community curatorship, and comedy symposium. Contact Handumanan Museo de Calbayog, (055) 209-1725.

UPSHOTS 8: Film Artists from Diliman-Focus on Chito Roño (Feb. 11-14) UP Film Theater, Diliman, Quezon City—A retrospective of Chito Roño's films such as "Stella Magtanggol," "Dekada '70," "Laro sa Baga," "Bata, Bata, Paano Ka Ginawa," "Eskapo," "Yamashita: The Tiger's Treasure" and "Spirit Warriors 2." Screenings at 4/ 7 pm. Contact UP Film Center, 925-0286/ 926-3640.

Feb. 12

10TH Pelikula at Lipunan (Feb. 12-18) SM Megamall—During the formal opening at 5:30 p.m., comedian Dolphy will be honored. There will be a week-long lobby display of his memorabilia, including the famous "puruntong" shorts he wore in the "John en Marsha" TV series. "El Crimen del Padre Amaro" will open the festival. Contact Mowelfund Film Institute, 727-1915/ 727-1961.

MALIBAY Cenakulo Exhibit ongoing, Cultural Center of the Philippines—An exhibition presenting the 100-year-old *senakulo* tradition of Malibay, Pasay City. Contact Edgar Granada, 0916-4221788.

BALAKI Ko Day, Iligan City and Cagayan de Oro City—A series of literary readings by 20 writers and students based in Iligan and Cagayan de Oro City to develop wide public appreciation of local contemporary Philippine literature in Cebuano, Filipino and English. Contact Jaime An Lim, (076) 2516-131.

Feb. 13

RENE Villanueva Retrospect (Feb. 13-15) 8 p.m., Raha Sulayman Theater, Fort Santiago, Intramuros, Manila—A rare trilogy-in-one-night featuring Palanca Hall of Famer Rene Villanueva's works: "Watawat" (direction by Rafly Tejada); "The Bomb" (Soxie Topacio); and "Walang Iwanan" (Melvin Lee). Contact Peta, 724-9637.
PRESENCE: Musica Para sa Puso at Damdamin, 7:30 p.m., Tanghalang Aurelio Tolentino—Free concert featuring Shigeko Suzuki to open the annual Philippine-Japan Festival 2003 from February to March. Suzuki has won major awards in Japan and has performed in several countries. Free admission. Contact the Japan Foundation, 811-6155 to 58.

Feb. 14

CINEMA Paraiso: "Maaala-ala Mo Kaya," 6:30 p.m., Tanghalang Leandro Locsin, NCCA—Showing of Filipino cinema classic starring Carmen Rosales. Contact Ellen Ramos, 727-1915.

TALI ng Kasayahan at Kasaysayan (Feb. 14-16), Nueva Ecija—A week-long festival with competitions in streetdancing, kuwentong pambayan (story-writing); teatro ng bayan, native band playing, solo singing, patintero o harang tage, dama, photography; and painting. Other activities include Parada ng Bayan, Ilongot cultural presentation, local arts and crafts exhibit, film showing of "Lumang Bayan," and staging of "Minggan Anino Bayan." Contact Elito Circa, (044) 456-6309

DILA-AMBONG: Literary Performances of Western Visayas Literature, Feb 14-21, Antique, Bacolod, Iloilo City—A reading/ performance tour of selected Western Visayas literature in the various languages of the region: Hiligaynon, Kiniray-a, English, Aklanon and Filipino. Featuring writers Rodolfo Boy Cabado, Zenalda B. French, Alice Tan-Gonzales, and Leoncio Derlada, among others. Contact Evee Huervena (039) 336-4389.

WEALTH of Cultural Wonders of Bohol, Tagbilaran City—Performances by the Loboc Children's Choir, Dimiao Children's Rondalla, Alicia Bamboo Ensemble, Diwanag of Holy Name University, and Loboc Brass Band at different venues. The celebration includes the first Bohol Heritage Olympics, which features a province-wide competition in balitaw (romantic duet), comparza (traditional rondalla), kuradang (local folk dance), and guitar playing. Contact Ms Bailo, (038) 411-3666/ 501-9186.

INDIGENIZING Social Studies, Manay, Davao Oriental—Training of 62 selected teachers from different levels In Manay on how to integrate the aspects of the Mandaya cultural heritage into their social studies syllabi. Contact Maria Galagala-Bitoy, (087) 811-5489/ 811-5495.

Days of passion, nights of ardor

From page E1

Pete Lacaba
author of "Days of Disquiet, Nights of Rage"

But soft! What light through yonder window breaks
It is the East and Juliet is the sun
Arise fair sun and kill the envious moon
Who is already sick and pale with grief
That thou her maid art far more fair than she.—"Romeo and Juliet" by William Shakespeare

Marra P.L. Lanot
Muse of the author of "Days of Disquiet, Nights of Rage"

(I do not know what it is about you that closes
and opens only something in me understands
the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses)
nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands.—e.e. cummings

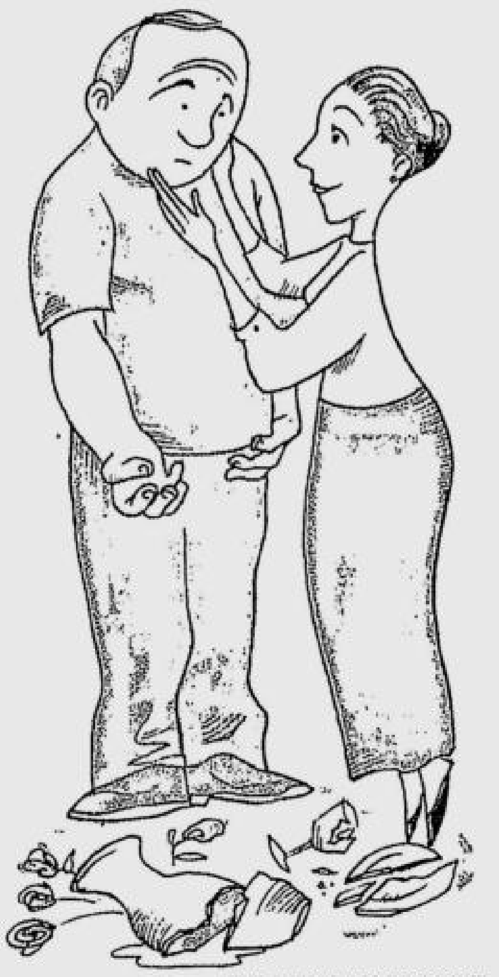
Carlitos Siguion-Reyna
filmmaker

He believed in the green light, the orgiastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then but that's no matter-tomorrow we will run faster, stretch our arms farther… And one fine morning.
—from "The Great Gatsby" by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Christine Godinez Ortega
Mindanao-based teacher, poet and culture leader

My clumsiest dear, whose hands shipwreck vases,
At whose quick touch all glasses chip and ring,
Whose hands are bulls in china, burs in linen,
And have no cunning with any soft thing…

Be with me darling early and late. Smash glasses—
I will study wry music for your sake.
For should your hands drop white and empty
All the toys of the world would break.
—from "Love Poem" by John Frederick Nims



ILLUSTRATIONS: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Ian Casocot
award-winning Visayas-based young writer and editor of Sands and Coral, literary journal of Silliman University

… The room was small, I only made out the outlines of clutter and disorder, there was the smell of the alcohol he burned in his stove. He locked the door behind us, and then for a moment, in the gloom, we simply stared at each other—with dismay, with relief, and breathing hard. I was trembling. I thought, if I do not open the door at once and get out of here, I am lost. But I knew I could not open the door, I knew it was too late; soon it was too late to do anything but moan. He pulled me against him, putting himself into my arms as though he were giving me himself to carry, and slowly pulled me down with him to that bed. With everything in me screaming No! yet the sum of me sighed Yes!—from James Baldwin's "Giovanni's Room"

New Dimalanta poetry collection launched on Feb. 14

THE UST Center for Creative Writing and Studies (UST-CCWS) will launch "Passional: New Poems and Some Translations," the sixth collection of poetry of Ophelia Alcantara Dimalanta, on Feb. 14, 5:30 p.m., at the Center for Intercultural Studies, UST Central Library Bldg., España, Manila.

The collection, published by the UST Publishing House, reaffirms Dimalanta's status as the country's foremost woman poet. It is distinguished by emotional depth, intellectual sophistication, and creative control—hallmarks of Dimalanta's poetics.

ZUNIEGA

The new collection features a showcase of Dimalanta poems translated into Filipino by top young poets Rebecca Añonuevo and Michael Coroza.

To recite the new poems are poetry lovers such as Supreme Court Deputy Administrator Justice Zenaida Elepano, Unesco Commissioner Jose David Lapuz, and several others.

To provide a musical interlude is virtuoso pianist J. Greg Zuniega.

"Passional" is available in soft cover. Call the UST Publishing House (tel., 731-3522, 731-3101 locals 8252, 8278) or the UST-CCWS (731-3101 local 8281).

Edna Manlapaz on Paz Latorena

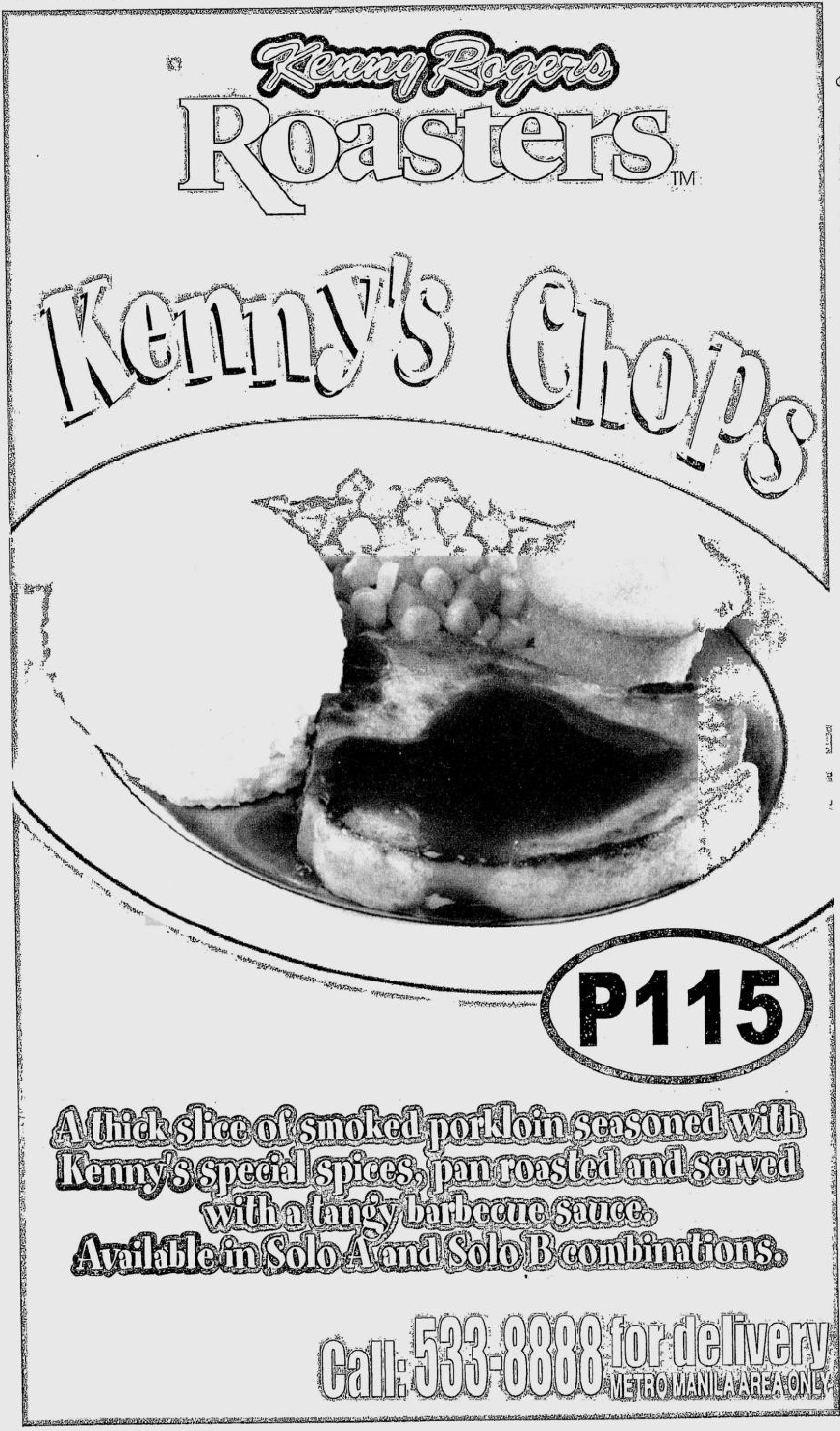
LITERARY scholar Edna Zapanta-Manlapaz will lecture on the late Paz Latorena in a literary forum at the seminar-workshop rooms of the UST Center for Creative Writing and Studies on Feb. 12, 3 p.m., at the St. Raymund's (AB-Commerce) Bldg., UST campus, Manila.

Sponsored by the CCWS, the lecture will situate the significance of the life and works of Latorena, one of the literary matriarchs of today's Filipino writers in English.

A member of the first generation of Filipino writers in English, Latorena was known for her highly sensitive and sophisticated fiction that prefigured many of today's feminist concerns. During her time, she earned many admirers, among them the hard-to-please Jose Garcia Villa.

To compose the panel of reactors to Manlapaz's paper are Rebecca Añonuevo and UST professor emeritus Milagros Tanlayco.

The lecture is open to the public. Call 731-3101 local 8281.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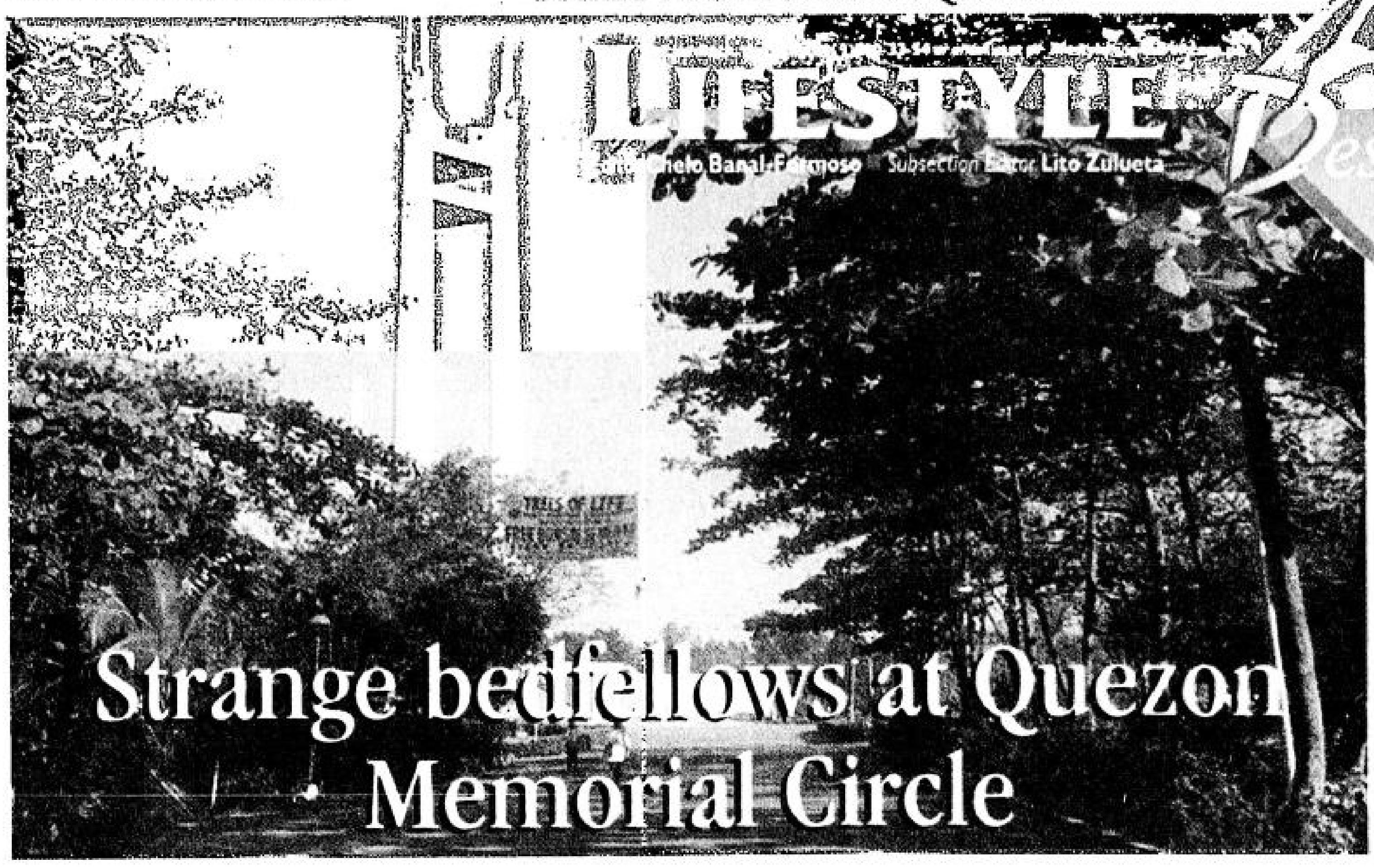

Strange bedfellows at Quezon Memorial Circle

The Quezon Monument, the original occupant, is threatened with eviction by the 'squatters' of restos, 'tiangges' and hawkers who have taken over the Circle

STREAMERS obstruct sight lines to the Quezon Memorial Monument

SPACED OUT

Augusto F. Villalon

AT THE Quezon Memorial Circle, there exist two different, opposing types of parks. One is a solemn park commemorating President Quezon that is vastly reduced from its original size. The second type is a pulsating park set up for the amusement of Quezon City residents.

It is easy to see why there is a conflict. One side is a solemn park to honor Quezon. The other side is an open area where recreational activities are provided. Both types of parks are absolute necessities. But solemnity and amusement cannot mix like oil and water.

At the solemn park, the Quezon Monument commemorates the first President of the Philippine Commonwealth. He was an important man who devoted much of his life to our country.

To remind the present and future generations of who he was, his remains lie under the pylons of the Quezon Monument. The stature of Quezon demands respect, which is enhanced by the quiet, verdant space that radiates peace.

The American Cemetery in Fort Bonifacio and Corregidor have peaceful radiance. Contrary to Filipino fears, a place that is peaceful, green and quiet is not boring. We need quiet places.

But we also need amusement parks that offer a variety of activities.

In front of the Invalides in Paris, the resting place of Napoleon, is a large open space where Parisians spend their weekends sitting on the grass, walking their dogs, throwing frisbees, and even playing a quick game of soccer.

No loud music blares, no food stalls or permanent restaurants stand in the park. Nor do hawkers, carousels and ferris wheels detract from the solemnity of the place. The building that commemorates Napoleon and houses his mortal remains is the principal focus and the only reason for the park's being there. It is a dignified park that attracts, rather than repels, people.

A national shrine, the Circle falls under the

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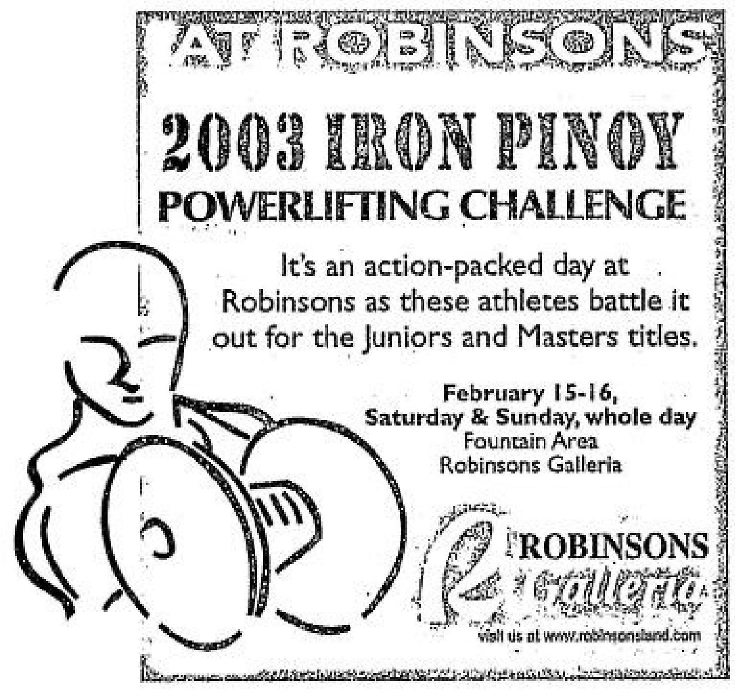

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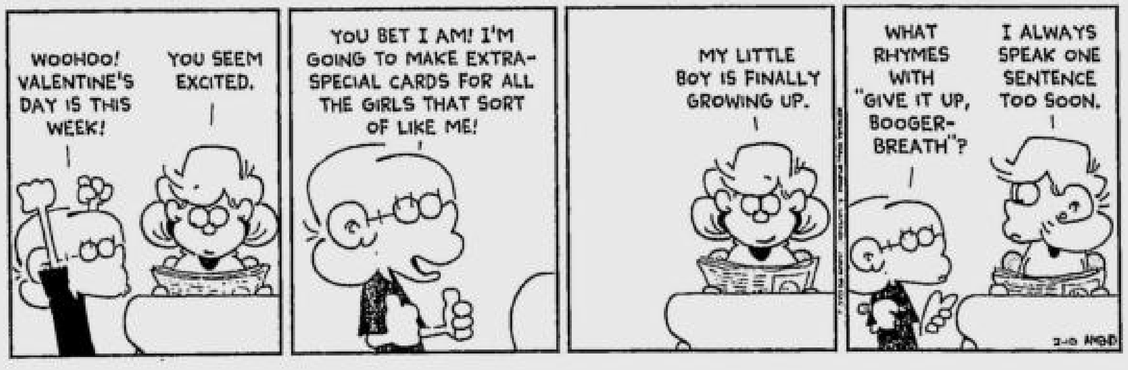
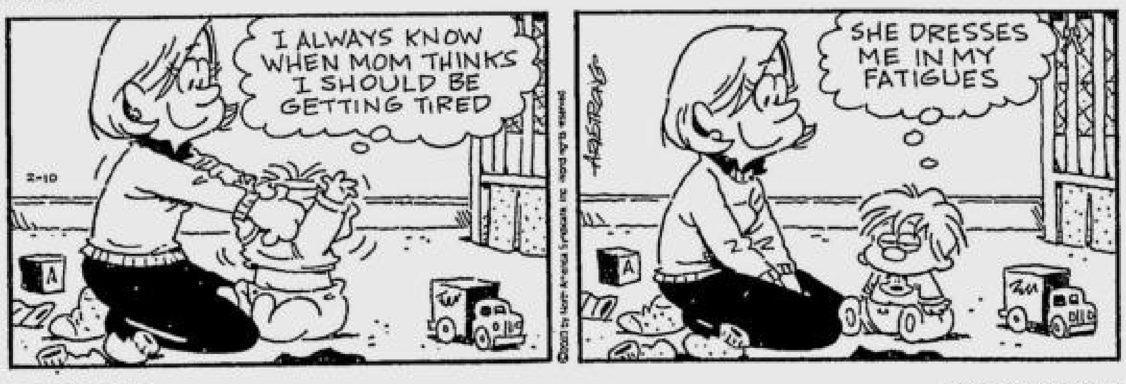
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WOOHOO! VALENTINE'S DAY IS THIS WEEK!
YOU SEEM EXCITED.
YOU BET I AM! I'M GOING TO MAKE EXTRA-SPECIAL CARDS FOR ALL THE GIRLS THAT SORT OF LIKE ME!
MY LITTLE BOY IS FINALLY GROWING UP.
WHAT RHYMES WITH "GIVE IT UP, BOOGER-BREATH"?
I ALWAYS SPEAK ONE SENTENCE TOO SOON.
2-10 AMEND

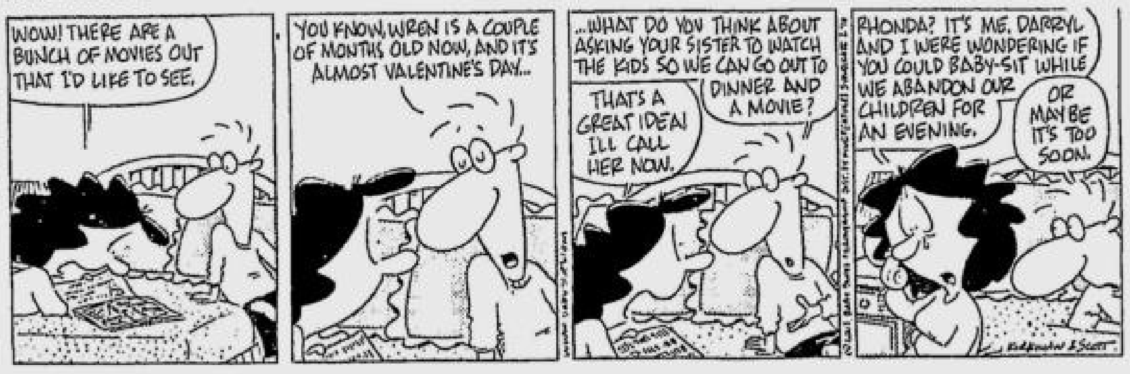
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I ALWAYS KNOW WHEN MOM THINKS I SHOULD BE GETTING TIRED
SHE DRESSES ME IN MY FATIGUES
2-10
ARMSTRONG

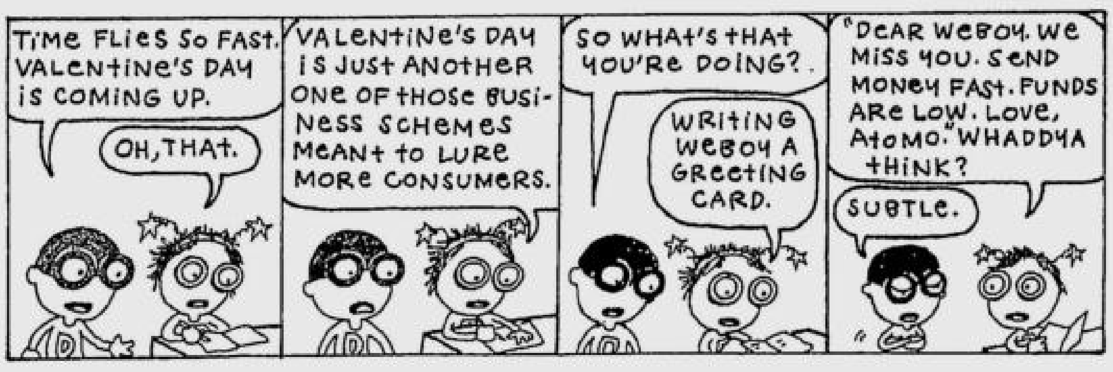
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WOW! THERE ARE A BUNCH OF MOVIES OUT THAT I'D LIKE TO SEE.
YOU KNOW, WREN IS A COUPLE OF MONTHS OLD NOW, AND IT'S ALMOST VALENTINE'S DAY...
...WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT ASKING YOUR SISTER TO WATCH THE KIDS SO WE CAN GO OUT TO DINNER AND A MOVIE?
THAT'S A GREAT IDEA! I'LL CALL HER NOW.
RHONDA? IT'S ME, DARRYL. AND I WERE WONDERING IF YOU COULD BABY-SIT WHILE WE ABANDON OUR CHILDREN FOR AN EVENING.
OR MAYBE IT'S TOO SOON.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


TIME FLIES SO FAST. VALENTINE'S DAY IS COMING UP.
OH, THAT.
VALENTINE'S DAY IS JUST ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE BUSINESS SCHEMES MEANT TO LURE MORE CONSUMERS.
SO WHAT'S THAT YOU'RE DOING?
WRITING WEBOY A GREETING CARD.
"DEAR WEBOY. WE MISS YOU. SEND MONEY FAST. FUNDS ARE LOW. LOVE, ATOMO." WHADDYA THINK?
SUBTLE.

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Robert Wagner, Laura Dern, Judith Anderson, George Stephanopoulos

Happy Birthday: You'll have what it takes to turn your life around and do what you know in your heart is best for you this year. You are about to replace your complacent attitude with one of force and determination. This is your year to make the decision that will set the pace for the rest of your life. Your numbers are 6, 19, 23, 27, 31, 44

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Lend a helping hand to those going through a bad time. When it comes to getting things done, you are a master.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): If you keep your composure and deal with each issue as it arises today, you will find yourself in a good position. Your strength and patience will pay off for you in the long run.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Don't get too cocky when dealing with your peers, or you may end up with some professional enemies. Try not to stick your nose in other people's private affairs.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Your self-control will pay off. By being observant and listening to what others have to say, you will have the added knowledge needed to find solutions.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Your unpredictable nature will leave those around you feeling confused and uncertain. Don't take action too quickly. Sit back and observe those around you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Experience will play a big role in your life today. If you aren't 100 percent sure of your actions, don't make them. Positive thought will lead to positive action.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): It's time to spruce up your home. It will help you to get things done a little faster and more efficiently. You will save money and feel content.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Don't believe everything you're told. Go to the source. Be informed before getting involved in something that is likely to cost you money.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You have to start taking better care of yourself. Use moderation. Don't spend time gossiping.

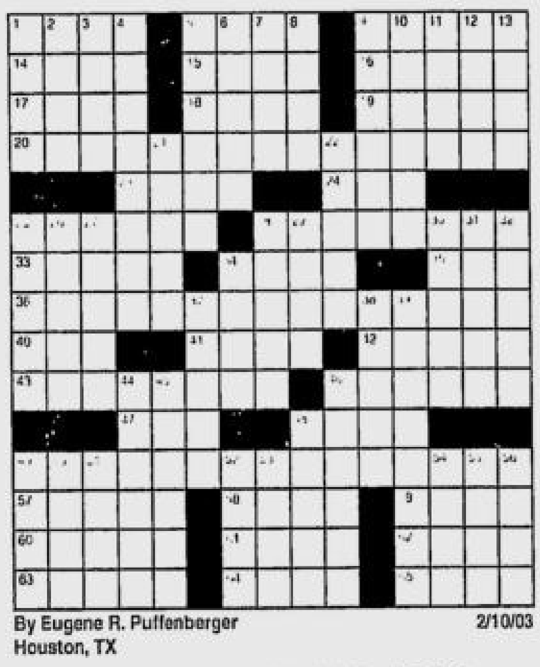
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Plan a fun-filled activity that will please everyone. Get back to basics and family values. The time spent together will result in a closer bond.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Sit tight and don't feel pressured to make a move. Wait until you feel comfortable with the changes that you are contemplating. Someone may not be thinking of your best interests.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): You may have to force yourself to get out and do things today. You can meet an ideal mate if you are single, or perhaps a business partner who likes your ideas. Act on your first instincts.

Birthday Baby: You will always follow your own instincts and will stand by your convictions no matter what. You will be stubborn, loyal, steadfast and even a little aggressive. You will be the one who will take a stance and make things happen.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Eugene R. Puffenberger
Houston, TX

2/10/03

ACROSS
1 Mirrored
5 Roses' places
9 Mouselike mammal
14 Flooring piece
15 Hand-cream ingredient
16 Brownish-gray
17 Quantity of paper
18 Violent public disorder
19 Composer Blake
20 Choices for the first of a threesome
23 Marsh hen
24 Pint drink
25 Noah's peak
28 Eye problem
33 Nasser successor
34 Masculine
35 Old card game
36 Choices for the second of a threesome
40 Dwindle
41 Riga resident
42 Extent covered
43 Climber's supports
46 Alarm bell
47 Pay dirt
48 Skedaddle!
49 Choices for the third of a threesome
57 Get around
58 Fact fabricator
59 Doing nothing
60 Cantaloupe or casaba
61 Cable channel's letters
62 Char slightly
63 News medium
64 Comprehends
65 Bryn __ College

DOWN
1 Gillette shaver
2 Docking site
3 Spirited vigor
4 Political donkey?
5 "Contempt" star Brigitte
6 George who was Mary Ann Evans
7 Way in
8 Fixes in position
9 Stanwyck film, "__ Dallas"
10 Teamster
11 Barker's mark
12 Long, heroic poem
13 Seven days
21 Reluctant
22 Food consumer
25 Selling point
26 Stallone character
27 Sun-dried brick
28 Plays' players
29 Thanks __!
30 Ladd and Greenspan
31 Stocky Welsh dog
32 Small memento
34 TV's talking horse
37 Burstyn of "The Exorcist"
38 Sing
39 Terseness
44 Maintain a grip
45 East
46 Rose stickers
48 End of land or sea?
49 Rope fiber
50 Affirm positively
51 Bamako's land
52 Bullring bravos
53 Stand
54 Creative thought
55 Long nail
56 Deborah of film

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

A	L	M	A	N	A	C	■	S	A	T	I	R	E	S
R	E	E	L	E	C	T	■	H	U	R	R	Y	U	P
M	A	D	D	E	R	S	■	A	R	I	K	A	R	A
O	V	I	E	D	O	■	S	P	A	M	■	N	O	N
R	E	A	R	S	■	S	E	E	S	A	W	■	■	■
E	A	T	S	■	B	L	E	D	■	R	A	J	A	H
D	L	I	■	L	O	A	D	■	M	A	L	O	N	E
C	O	O	L	A	N	T	■	C	A	N	T	A	T	A
A	N	N	I	K	A	■	S	A	W	S	■	N	O	R
R	E	S	E	E	■	P	A	N	S	■	B	R	I	T
■	■	■	S	T	H	A	I	T	■	I	R	I	N	I
A	B	C	■	H	E	N	D	■	C	R	A	V	E	N
I	R	O	N	O	U	T	■	N	A	I	V	E	T	E
D	E	L	O	U	S	E	■	A	L	B	E	R	T	S
S	W	A	T	T	E	D	■	B	L	E	S	S	E	S

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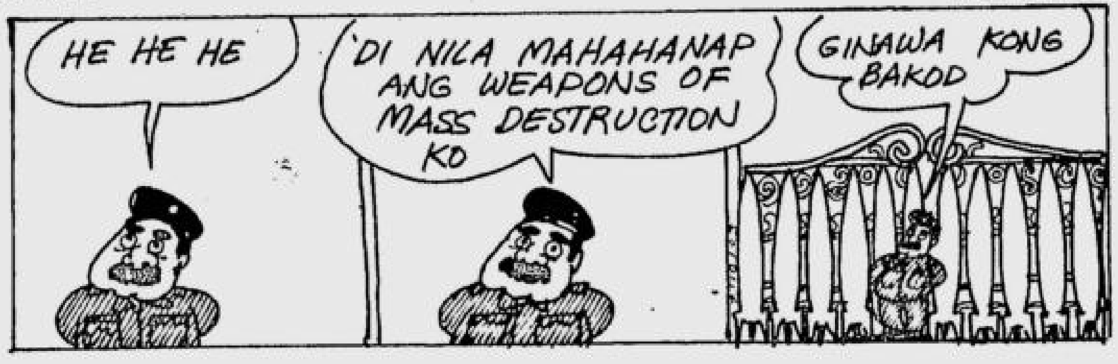
2/10/03

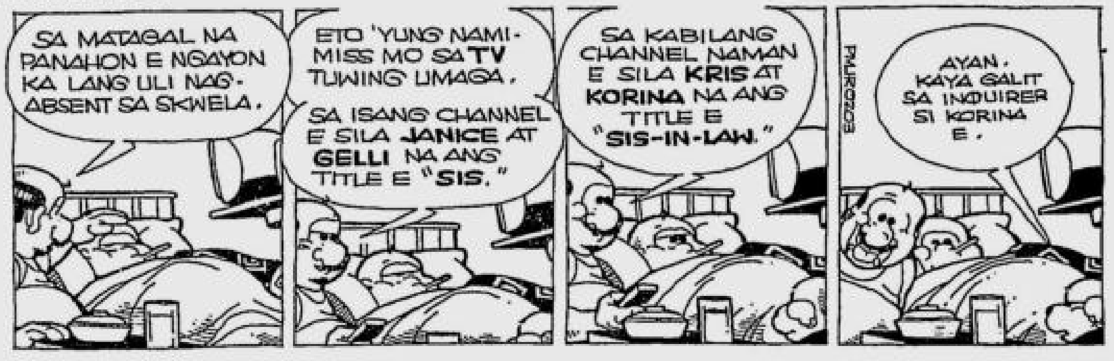
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


HE HE HE
'DI NILA MAHAHANAP ANG WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION KO
GINAWA KONG BAKOD

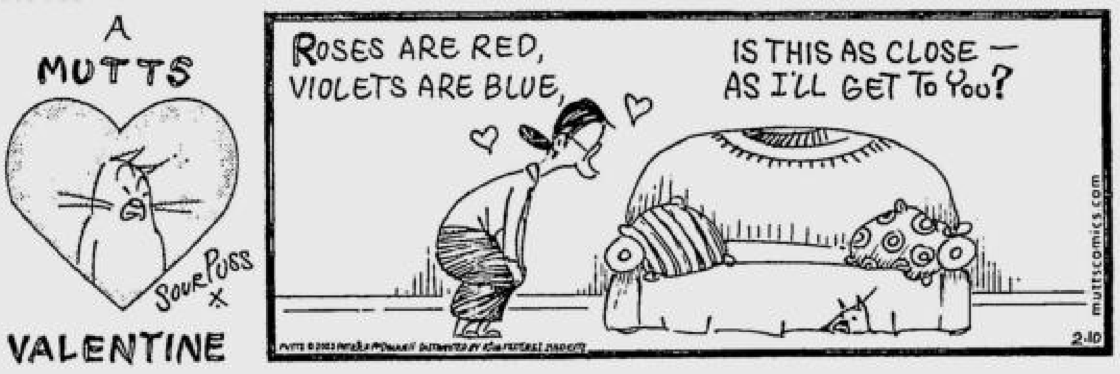
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


SA MATAGAL NA PANAHON E NGAYON KA LANG ULI NAG-ABSENT SA SKWELA.
ETO 'YUNG NAMI-MISS MO SA TV TUWING UMAGA.
SA ISANG CHANNEL E SILA JANICE AT GELLI NA ANG TITLE E "SIS."
SA KABILANG CHANNEL NAMAN E SILA KRIS AT KORINA NA ANG TITLE E "SIS-IN-LAW."
PMJR0203
AYAN. KAYA GALIT SA INQUIRER SI KORINA E.

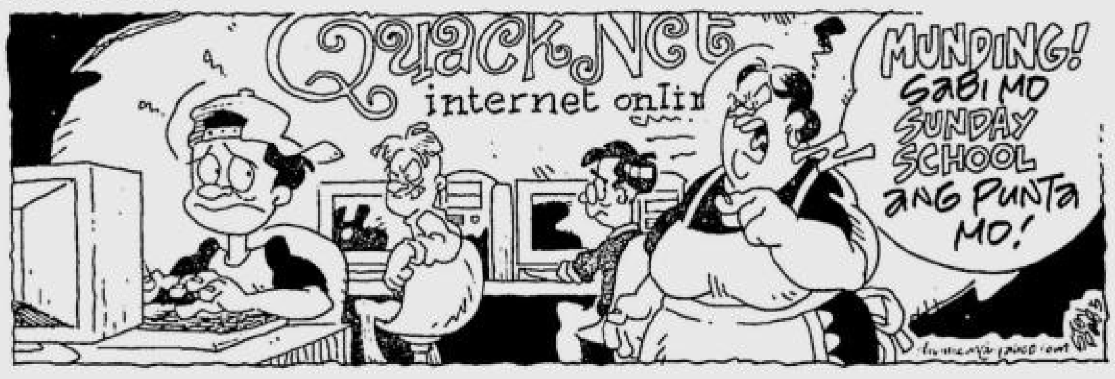
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


A MUTTS VALENTINE
SOUR PUSS X
ROSES ARE RED, VIOLETS ARE BLUE,
IS THIS AS CLOSE — AS I'LL GET TO YOU?
mutts comics.com
2-10

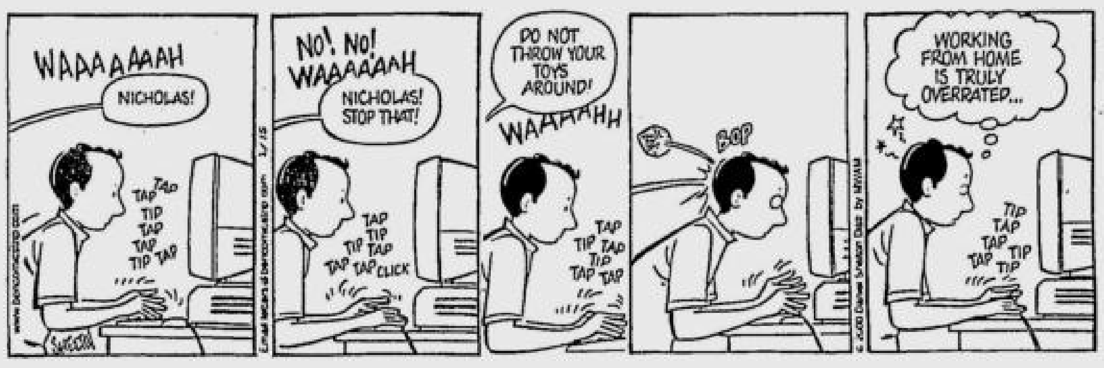
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


QuackNet internet onlin
MUNDING! SABI MO SUNDAY SCHOOL ANG PUNTA MO!

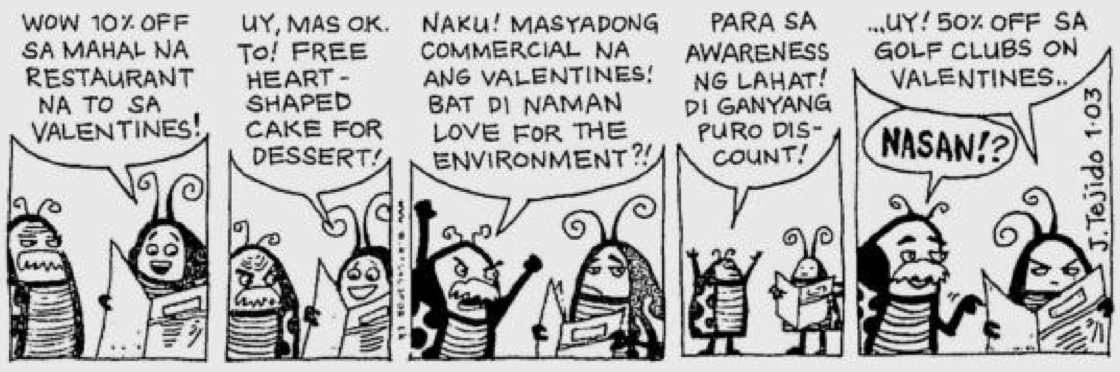
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


WAAAAAAAH
NICHOLAS!
TAP TAP TIP TAP TAP TIP TAP
NO! NO! WAAAAAAH
NICHOLAS! STOP THAT!
TAP TIP TAP TIP TAP TAP CLICK
DO NOT THROW YOUR TOYS AROUND!
WAAAAHH
TAP TIP TAP TIP TAP TAP
BOP
WORKING FROM HOME IS TRULY OVERRATED...
TIP TAP TAP TAP TIP TIP

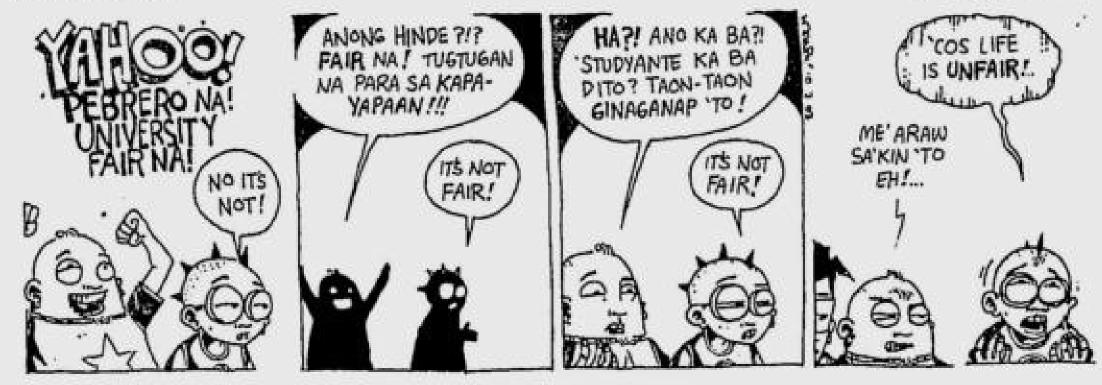
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


WOW 10% OFF SA MAHAL NA RESTAURANT NA TO SA VALENTINES!
UY, MAS OK. TO! FREE HEART-SHAPED CAKE FOR DESSERT!
NAKU! MASYADONG COMMERCIAL NA ANG VALENTINES! BAT DI NAMAN LOVE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT?!
PARA SA AWARENESS NG LAHAT! DI GANYANG PURO DISCOUNT!
...UY! 50% OFF SA GOLF CLUBS ON VALENTINES..
NASAN!?
J. Tejido 1-03

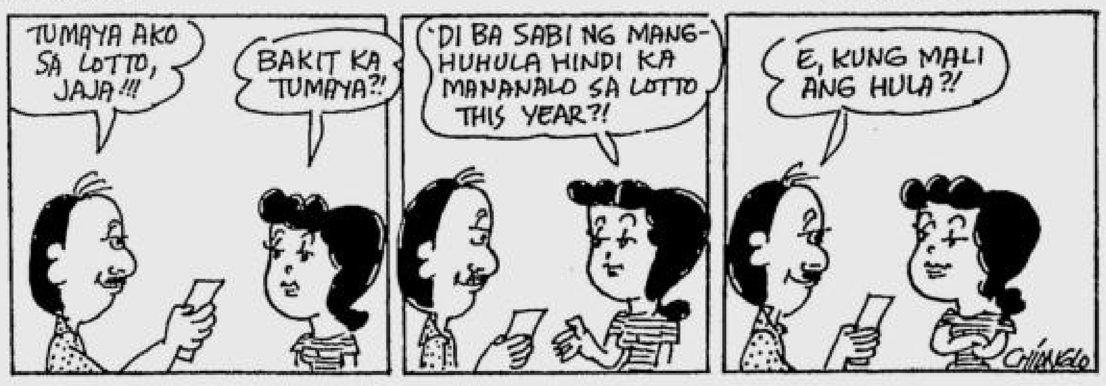
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


YAHOO! PEBRERO NA! UNIVERSITY FAIR NA!
NO ITS NOT!
ANONG HINDE?!? FAIR NA! TUGTUGAN NA PARA SA KAPAYAPAAN!!!
ITS NOT FAIR!
HA?! ANO KA BA?! 'STUDYANTE KA BA DITO? TAON-TAON GINAGANAP 'TO!
ITS NOT FAIR!
'COS LIFE IS UNFAIR!..
ME' ARAW SA'KIN 'TO EH!...

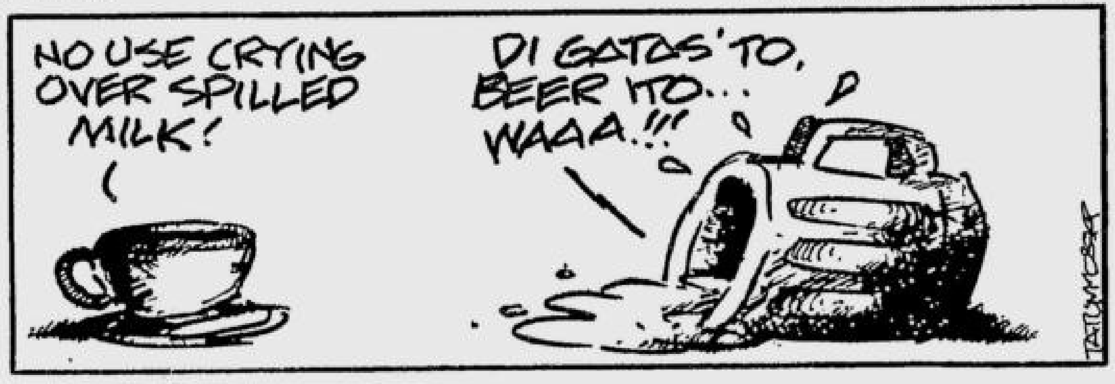
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


TUMAYA AKO SA LOTTO, JAJA!!!
BAKIT KA TUMAYA?!
'DI BA SABI NG MANGHUHULA HINDI KA MANANALO SA LOTTO THIS YEAR?!
E, KUNG MALI ANG HULA?!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


NO USE CRYING OVER SPILLED MILK!
DI GATAS 'TO, BEER ITO... WAAA!!!
TATUM

Portrait of a secret society seething with sexuality

By Constantino C. Tejero

A CERTAIN paradox imbues Kiko Escora's new series of big artworks recording a section of Manila nightlife.

Despite the crowded scenes, anonymity in the big city emerges as the theme. Though all goings-on are set in rooms and backrooms, the impression is that of a portrait of Night Town. And despite the overheated atmosphere of the imagery, the effect on the viewer is chilling.

"Familiar Strangers," nine charcoal works on paper, was exhibited recently in The Drawing Room, Metrostar Building, 1007 Metropolitan Ave., Makati City.

Each piece is a dramatic vignette. Here is a faceless crowd (hence, the mask-like faces in "Mirror People," "Prelude," "Glamourette"), and here be anonymous sex ("Egoiste," "Temptress," "Dancing Queen," "Wallpaper," "Persuasion," "In Anticipation").

This is not so much café society as denizens of seedy bars and dingy bistros. No matter how good-looking and well-dressed these people are, the aura surrounding them will always be sleazy. No matter how glam and fab the party, it is always set in the underground.

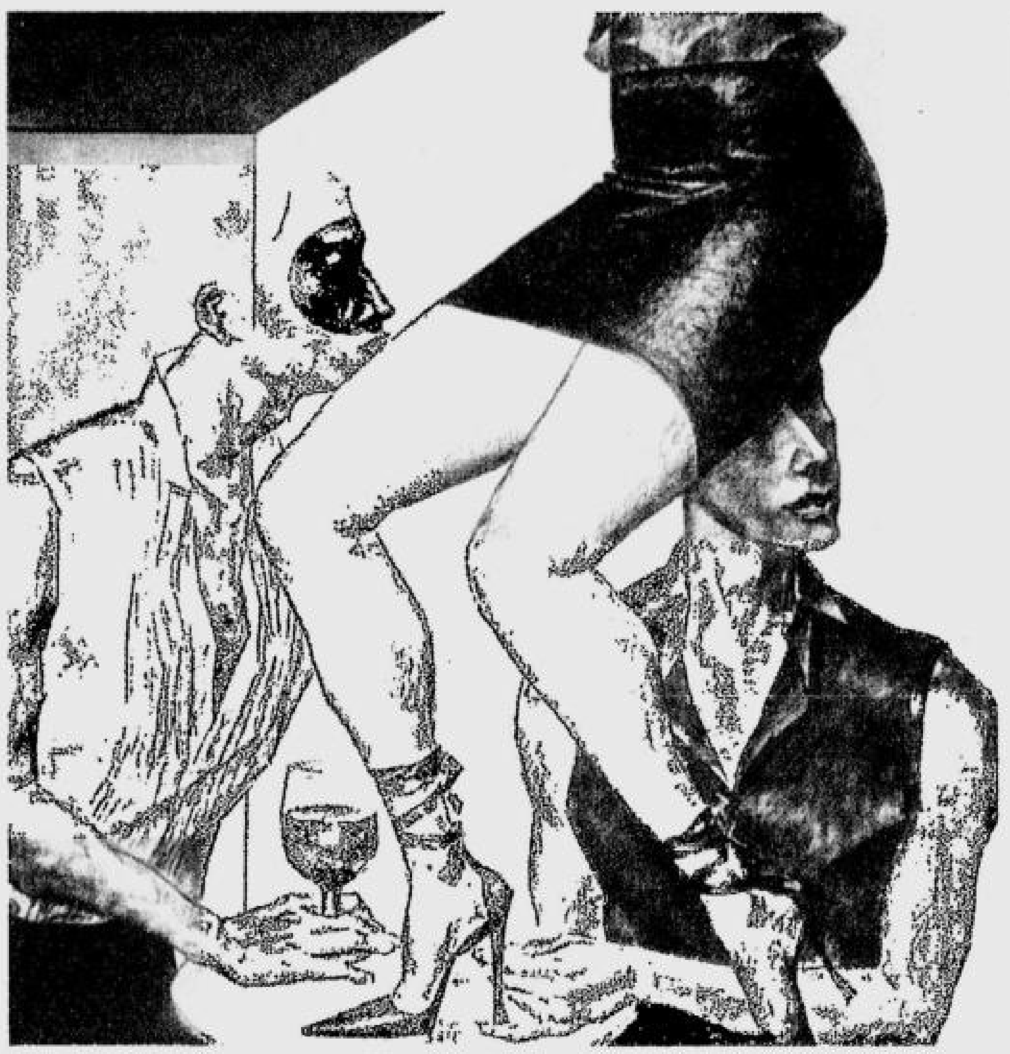
Documentary realism

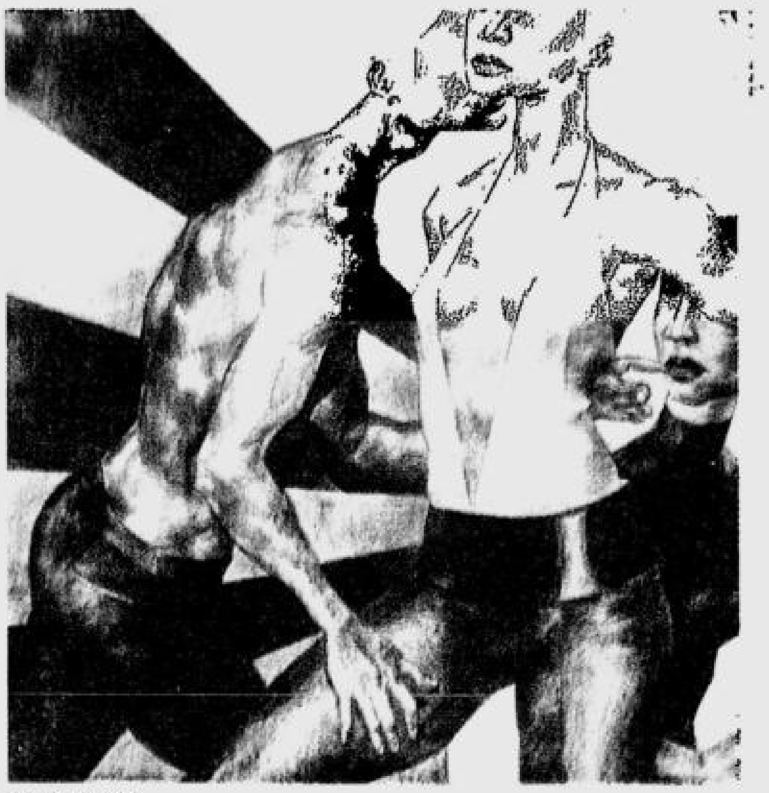
The artist's stylization of their postures and gestures contributes to the atmosphere of moral decay. The contortions of their bodies, the craning of their necks and twisting of their torsos, the straining of their limbs and flicking of their fingers, give them an inhuman quality. As if they were worms, snakes, maggots that thrive on putrefaction.

Has the artist set out and taken it upon himself to chronicle this carnivalesque side of Malate, as Toulouse-Lautrec once did of Moulin Rouge?

"Not really," says Escora. "I look at this as just things falling into place. Because this is my immediate environment. I am, in fact, part of the scene."

There's no sense of irony? Any social commentary? "At this point, *wala pa*. But as for the individual's role in society, I'm thinking of that."


"GLAMOURETTE"


"EGOISTE"

The vigorous interaction of the flat white of the exposed paper and the solid black of the charcoal gives each drawing a photographic effect, hence, a documentary feel. The meticulous highlighting and shading define every twitch and ripple of muscle, every fold and crumple of fabric.

"Drawing is closest to my heart," says the artist. "'*Pag gumagawa ng* intimate works, small works, I prefer pencil. Charcoal is a recent discovery. So far, *nagugustuhan ko*."

Humanistic approach

He has done various mediums, and even tried glass sculpture when he was younger.

"*Mas* fluid *ang* oil," he says. "*Mas* spontaneous *naman ang* acrylic, especially *'pag mabilisan. Tuyo kaagad, makita mo kaagad ang resulta ng trabaho mo*. I would say acrylic is the older brother of watercolor. I was doing watercolor when I was very young."

And here is another paradox: Escora was a theology student before he was sidetracked by art, but, as one can see, his works look anything but pious. The only influence of his theological studies on his art he can point out is its humanism, in which the human being, however base, is the center of the universe.

> Despite the overheated atmosphere of the imagery, the effect on the viewer is chilling

He enrolled in the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts, but did not finish the course. Instead, he proceeded to producing avant-garde art, often strong stuff.

Artists he admires include Francis Bacon, Lucian Freud, Ron Kitaj—all creators of agonized beings. "And Ang Kiukok, when I was younger," he adds.

Escora thinks the local art scene is thriving. "There's a lot of young artists now."

Of course, of course—but what about the quality of the art?

"*May* screening *'yan, e*... The best will always remain. Another artist once told me he couldn't find in the current art scene that spark like before. I don't think so. The spark is there."

CALENDAR
JANUARY 6-1 2003
(standing, from left) ERIC Guazon, Benjamin Dayrit III, Ferdinand Montemayor, Dr. Joel Mendez, Jemina, Ronald Ventura, Pedro Garcia, Butch Payawal and EJ Cabangon; (seated) Olan Ventura and Andres Barrioquinto

13 artists fill art 'calendar'

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

AS OPENING salvo for Art Year 2003, Big & Small Art Co. has chosen 13 artists, working along clearly divergent paths in both style and substance and who had their solo or first shows in the venue last year, hence the title, "Calendar."

The moving spirit of the gallery that advances pluralism and has become a haven of artistic freedom is, needless to say, owner Joel Mendez, a physician who specializes in weight management and who has helped several prominent show business people get back into shape.

Mendez happens to be an artist himself, a member of Tres Acidos (with Butch Payawal and Andres Barrioquinto).

The gallery ushers in the new year by bringing back people who made it a continuing beehive of artistic activity. These are Barrioquinto, E.J. Cabangon, Benjamin Elayda Dayrit III, Kiko Escora, Pedro Garcia, Eric Guazon, Jemina, Ferdinand Montemayor, Mendez, brothers Ronald and Olan Ventura and Payawal. Though relatively young, many have won awards.

The artists show pieces that best exemplify their style. Jemina, the lone woman, has landscapes that are more luscious than lush. Cool pastels dominate her spacious canvases, and her mellifluous brushstroke is decidedly feminine in sense and sensibility.

Mastery of detail

Montemayor's signature cityscapes, like "Red Sunday," dramatize the teeming urban space that finds relief in the hovering lunar light above. The artist shows mastery of detail, with his crowded scenarios of urban blight.

Barrioquinto's portraits—this time splattered with text in Spanish—probe deep into the character of the subject.

The show's piece de resistance is, evidently, Ronald Ventura's nudes. The large work in the exhibit happens to be the most impressive, a triptych showing both the male (no genitalia, please!) and the female anatomical forms, with a guitar in the middle and a hand moving across the strings, suggesting the identical contours and the same space for manipulation.

His younger brother, Olan, has a large work showing a man and a boy horsing around in spirited play, the former as the horse with the boy on his shoulders.

Dayrit merges both the real and the expressionist styles in his portraits of the Bagobo folk, which he has deconstructed beyond their nativist appeal. His flamboyant colorism is evident in the large piece with overlapping splashes and streaks of paint, both vertically and horizontally.

Escora's works—self-portraits—show gaunt faces, arched brows, punk hairstyle as well as the ubiquitous rose stuck in their mouths.

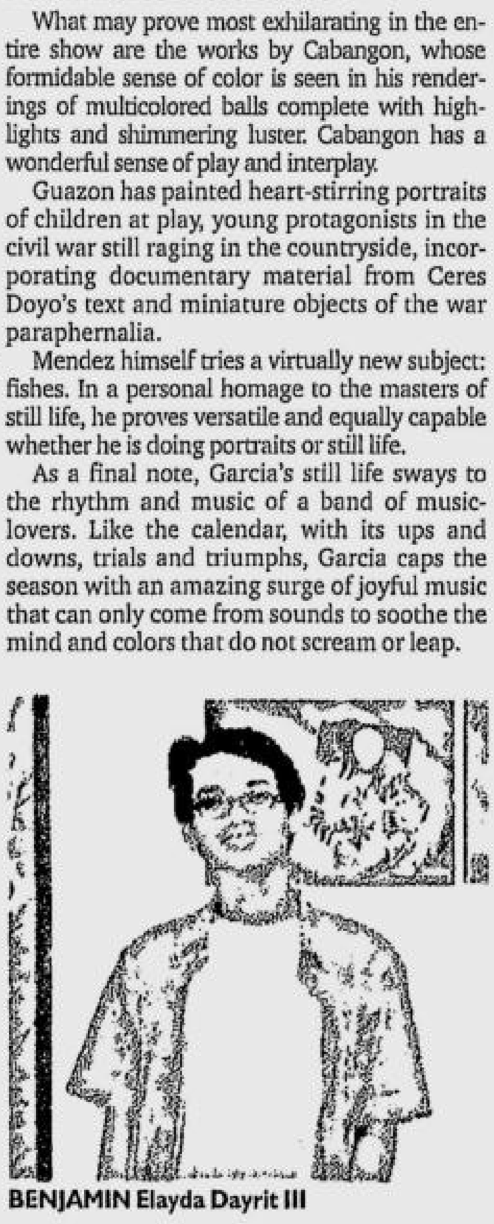
Formidable color sense

What may prove most exhilarating in the entire show are the works by Cabangon, whose formidable sense of color is seen in his renderings of multicolored balls complete with highlights and shimmering luster. Cabangon has a wonderful sense of play and interplay.

Guazon has painted heart-stirring portraits of children at play, young protagonists in the civil war still raging in the countryside, incorporating documentary material from Ceres Doyo's text and miniature objects of the war paraphernalia.

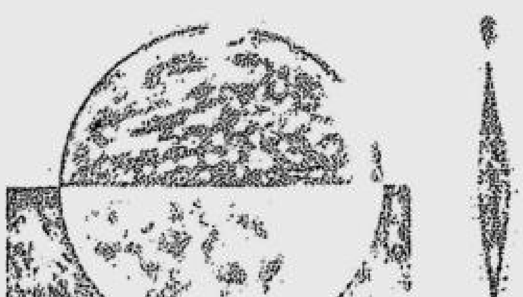
Mendez himself tries a virtually new subject: fishes. In a personal homage to the masters of still life, he proves versatile and equally capable whether he is doing portraits or still life.

As a final note, Garcia's still life sways to the rhythm and music of a band of music-lovers. Like the calendar, with its ups and downs, trials and triumphs, Garcia caps the season with an amazing surge of joyful music that can only come from sounds to soothe the mind and colors that do not scream or leap.


BENJAMIN Elayda Dayrit III

VISUAL ARTS

Tamondong at Drawing Room, Yuson at Pinto


"LUNA" by Joel Mendez in Big & Small Art Co. at the Artwalk, SM Megamall

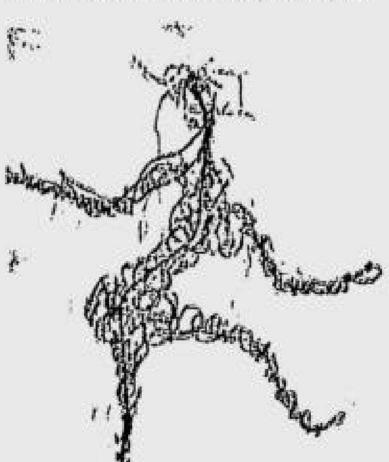
CHRISTIAN Tamondong, an emerging young artist, is mounting his first one-man show at The Drawing Room until Feb. 26.

Tamondong is an AAP 2001 awardee in painting and mixed media. The Drawing Room is located at Metrostar Building, 1007 Metropolitan Ave., Makati City. Call 897-6990/7877.

RONALD Caringal, Clint Catalan, Emil Dimar, Kim Landicho, Jone Lao, Lea Lim, Jong Pairez, Brian Sergio, Ritchie Sicosana, MM Yu and Alvin Zafra are the participating artists in "Pag-ibig Findings" at The Cubicle Art Space, 40-C Raymundo Ave., Stella Maris Subdivision, Maybunga, Pasig City. The exhibition will open on Feb. 14. Contact (0917) 207-4353.

SENIOR Interior Design students of the University of Santo Tomas College of Fine Arts and Design are holding their graduation exhibit, "Menage: A Different Perspective on the Family Lifestyle," until March 15 at the DesignEx Business Center, 352 Captain Henry Javier St., Orambo, Pasig. Sponsors include DesignEx, Boysen, Luxacraft Phils. Inc., Stone Age and Flexboard Fiber Cement Board. Contact (0917) 415-5943.

THE ALCOVE Photo Gallery and EyeAsia Philippines will hold its third annual basic photo workshop at the Filipinas Heritage Library. The schedule follows: Photo 101: Photography for Beginners on Feb. 19-20, 24-26, 6-9 p.m.; March 5-6, 10-12, 6-9 p.m.
The workshop will focus on the fundamentals of photography. Call 892-1801.


SCULPTOR Leo Yabut has been making waves in the US for his works. Educated at the Far Eastern University of Manila and Rheine Sieg Kunst Akademie, the artist is noted for his human figures in clay, wood, bending and cutting wire and steel. He spends most of his time in his studio in Groveland, Massachusetts. Above is "Dancing Lady," 1998.

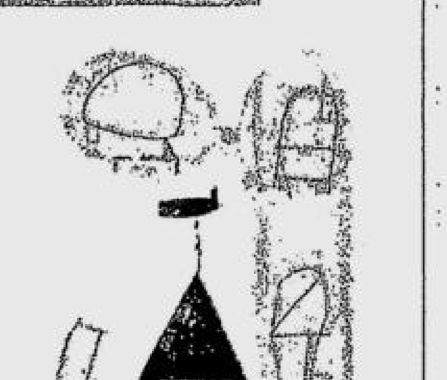
MANS Gonzales celebrates "Life's Blessings" in his second solo exhibit at the SSS Gallery, 2/F, SSS Building, East Avenue, Quezon City, starting today at 3 p.m. The exhibit runs until Feb. 24.

SCULPTOR Reggie Yuson, ceramic tile painter Jojo Ballo, and digital photographer Marlon Despues will hold their respective one-man exhibitions at the Pinto Art Gallery starting Feb. 16. Yuson presents new pieces in Galleries 1 and 2. Ballo's works will be at the Pinto Art Gallery Shop. Despues will present his black-and-white photographs of nudes at the Elouse.

All exhibits run Feb. 16-Mar. 30. Pinto Art Gallery is at 1 Sierra Madre St., Grand Heights, Antipolo City. Call 697-1015.

WORKS of Felix Amoncio and Jake Katah are on view at Frio Mixx, 5/L, Shangri-La Edsa Plaza, Mandaluyong City, until Feb. 14. "Two In One" is sponsored by Rotech Arts and Frames and Karcher.

"LUNA," a solo exhibit by Joel Mendez, is ongoing at the Big & Small Art Co. at the Artwalk, 4/L, SM Megamall Building A, Ortigas Complex, Mandaluyong City. The work "Luna" will be featured in a collection of Christine Bellen's poetry of the same title. The exhibit runs until Feb. 17. Call 374-2437.


CHRISTIAN Tamondong

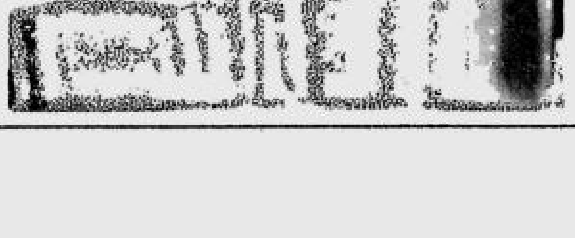
ALLIANCE Française de Manille presents "Sybaritic Dissonance," an exhibit by Kiko Escora.

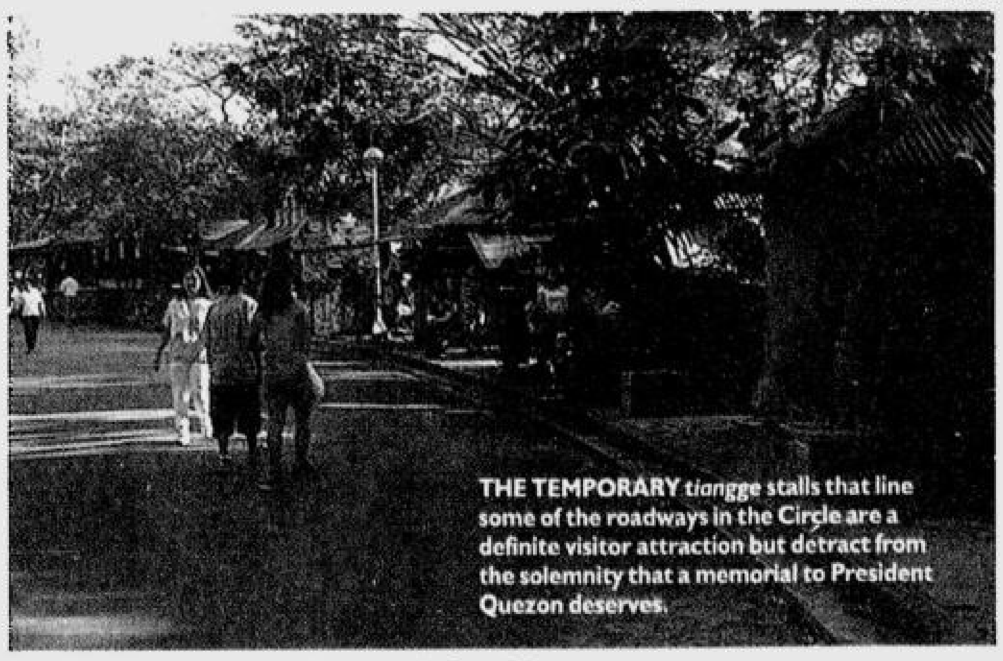
The exhibit opens today at the Alliance Française de Manille TotalFinaelf Gallery, 209 Nicanor Garcia St., Bel-Air II, Makati City. The exhibit runs until Feb. 28. Call 895-7585/7441.

THE CULTURAL Center of the Philippines and the Australian Embassy Manila present "Stone Bridges," an exhibit of the works of Australian designer and stone artist Robert Johnson at the Bulwagang Fernando Amorsolo Gallery, CCP Complex, Manila. The exhibit runs until Mar. 9. "Stone Bridges" is an exhibit of ancient rare earth materials and striking stoneworks from southern Australia. Call 832-3702.

FINALE Art Gallery is presenting the dramatic black-and-white photographs of Conrado Velasco in a one-man exhibit, "Project No. 3 from the Design Office of Conrado Velasco," Feb. 11-26.

Finale Art Gallery is at the 4/L, SM Megamall A, Mandaluyong City.


"UNTITLED," oil on canvas, by Alvin Villaruel, is part of the exhibit "Twenty/twenty" at Magnet, The Loop, ABS-CBN compund, Eugenio Lopez Jr. St., Quezon City. Villaruel's show is curated by Roberto Chabet.



THE TEMPORARY *tiangge* stalls that line some of the roadways in the Circle are a definite visitor attraction but detract from the solemnity that a memorial to President Quezon deserves.

Strange bedfellows . . .

From page F1

protective jurisdiction of the National Historical Institute, which regulates all new construction done within the boundaries of the shrine, to make sure that it remains the focus of the site.

Typical of government agencies, the NHI did not have the adequate budget to maintain the shrine and grounds. Therefore, control of the park went to authorities who did not understand that a park is not just a park and that a shrine and an amusement park are different.

Enter Charito Planas. She took over at a time of severe budget problems. Maintenance was poor. Nobody was using the park.

She started out by cleaning up, establishing recycling centers and composting the tons of leaves gathered each day. She now has branched out into organic vegetable and herb gardens. She planted trees all over the place, and I mean all over the place.

She established biking and walking paths. She built public furniture, installed lighting, and came up with activities to get the people of Quezon City to come in and enjoy the park.

So there came chess tournaments, bazaars, skating, open-air ballroom dancing, and other activities that appealed to the people. The Circle became a destination.

Structures of all sizes sprouted beneath the green tree cover. To earn money for the Circle, a building was constructed to entice well-known restaurants to open branches. It was development that mushroomed and went out of control.

But it was so much in the Pinoy style, a development dictated by horror vacui. So the open space was dotted with everything from masses of concrete benches and tables to the large buildings that housed the restaurants.

Finally the Circle earned enough to become self-sufficient, an achievement in this country where no public budgets are provided for leisure activities.

Charito's Pinoy style of development and of providing activities in the Circle did appeal to the Pinoy. Juan and Juana de la Cruz and their families flocked to the Circle. Take a look at the number of people who are there and be convinced of its success as a destination and recreation area. The Circle is now a people's park, probably the best one in the country.

Now Charito is tackling another type of park, a theme park. These are parks that focus development around a central theme like Disneyland. She is all set to tackle the country's prime theme park, Nayong Pilipino.

She can't get started immediately. She has to wait until Nayong Pilipino solves its relocation problem because its present site has been devoured by airport expansion plans. She shouldn't really stop with Nayong Pilipino.

Come to think of it, Charito is without question the best bet to revive the wasteland grounds of the Clark Centennial Expo and make it into the theme park that it was supposed to be. Charito knows what to do to get people to come.

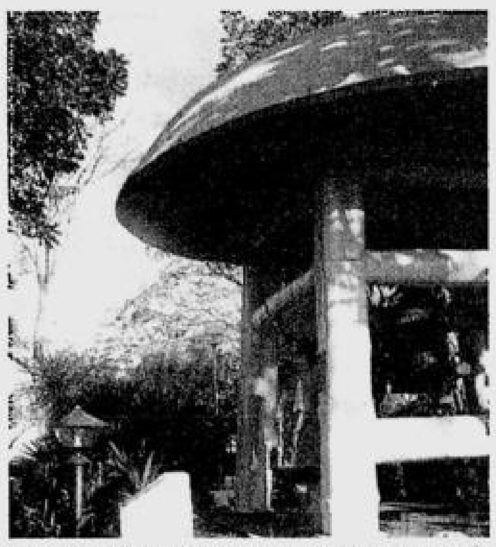
Charito had the good vision and the right *masa* touch in transforming the Circle into a people's park.

But the people's park clashes with the solemnity required by the Quezon Monument. The small open zone around the monument is now too small. But it is also too late to move the people's park elsewhere. What to do?

So the schizophrenia continues. Should the Circle be a peaceful memorial to President Quezon? Should it be an activity-laden amusement park for the people of Quezon City who need a place for relaxation?

The strange bedfellows are at odds with each other. A shotgun marriage seems the only answer.

Email the author at afv@pacific.net.ph



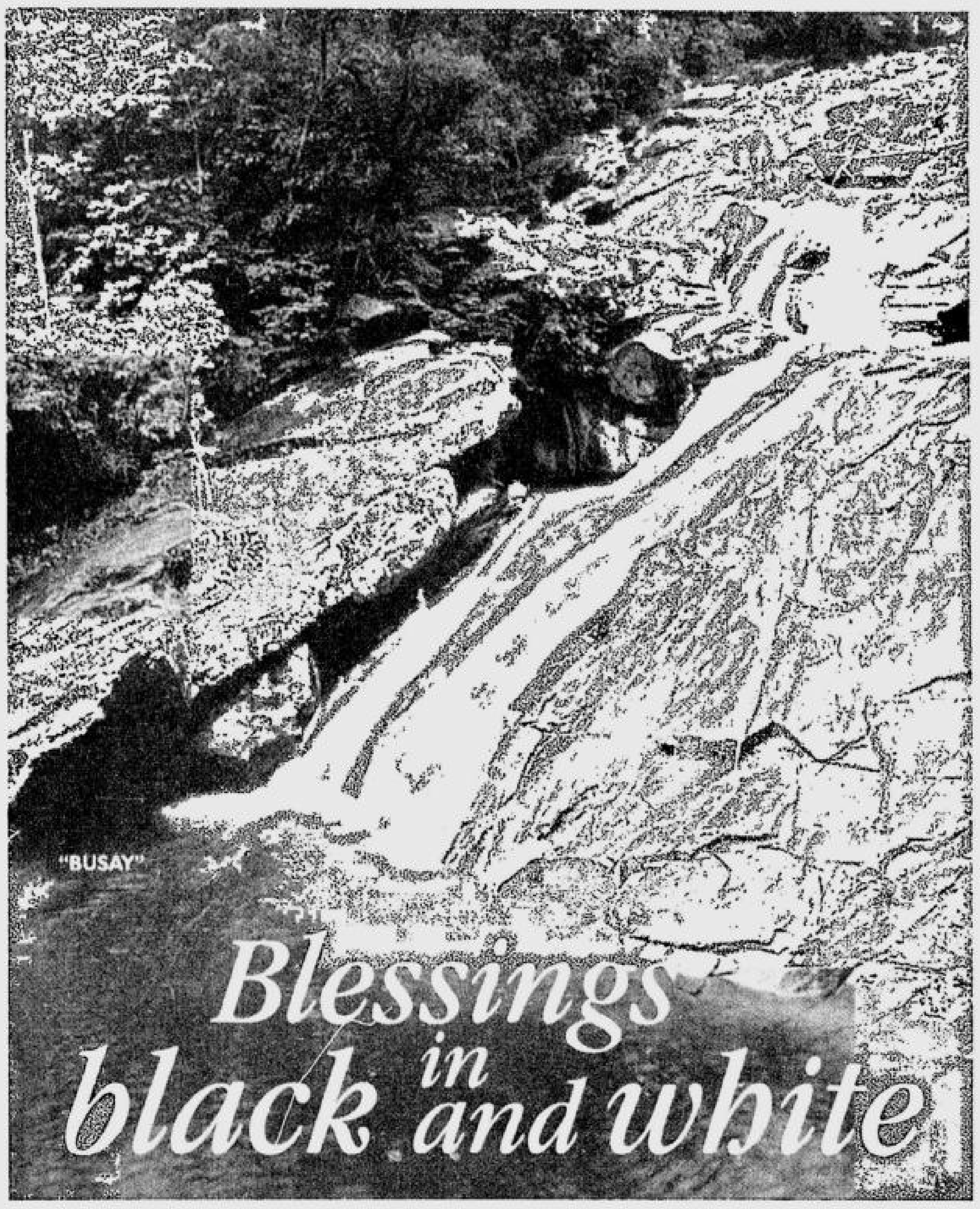
MANY of the structures constructed around the Quezon Memorial Circle do not preserve clear sight lines to the Quezon Monument.

New works by Manuel Ocampo and friends at UP

AN EXHIBIT of new works by seven painters who met as students at the UP College of Fine Arts in Diliman will open on Feb. 11.

Using various media, Andy Orencio, Manuel Ocampo, Ferdie Montemayor, Neil Manalo, Cris Villanueva, Rolly Acuña and Wilson Ma will show the different directions their art took since they last went to art school. This is a celebration of old friends coming together after being away from the scene and from each other.

Organized by Rolly Acuña and Ana P. Labrador, the exhibit will run until Feb. 28 at the White Wall of Crowded House, Vinzon's Hall Backyard, UP Diliman, Quezon City.



"BUSAY"

Blessings in black and white

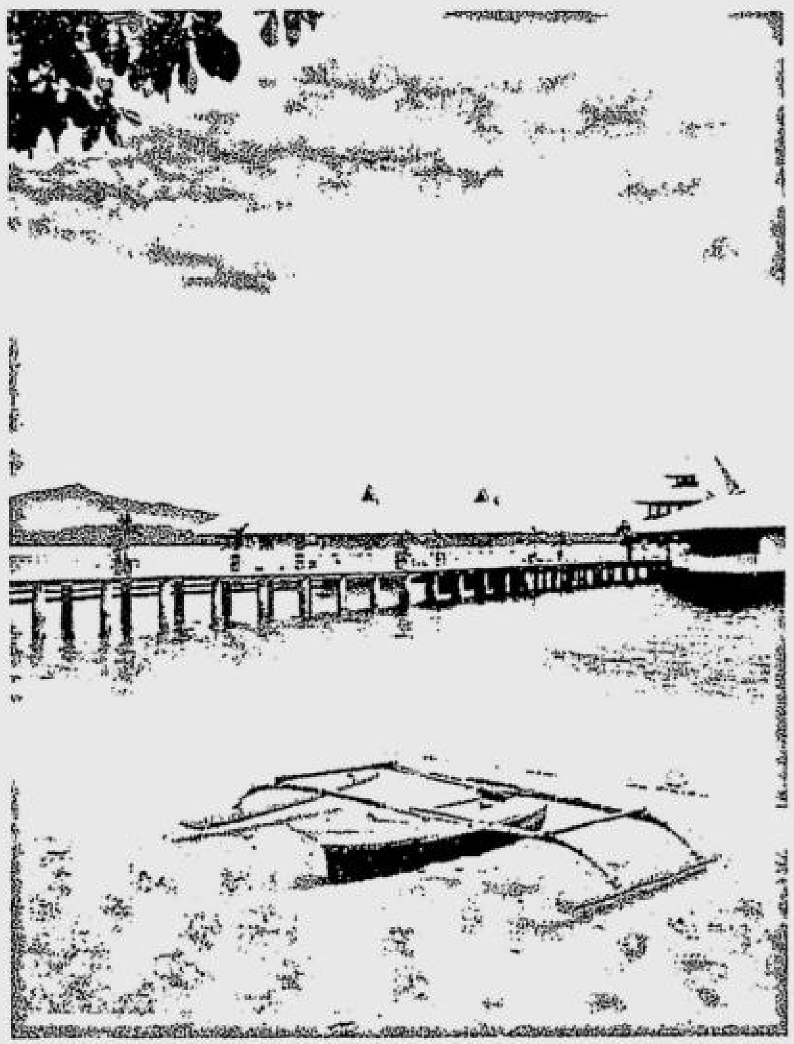
HOW does one capture the majesty of nature in black-and-white photographs? Can two colors do justice to the flaming sunset and the vast blueness of Honda Bay in Palawan?

For photographer Rey Castañeda, black-and-white photography is admittedly a more difficult medium. But it is also more contemplative, and that, he points out, is the main character of the Olangoan Falls in Puerto Princesa and the nearby environs of the Dos Palmas Arreceffi resort in Palawan.

The added depth and texture of black and white photographs also make them more beautiful the longer one stares at them, adds this former phone technician turned lensman. "In these particular subjects, the fluidity of the waterfall shots are emphasized."

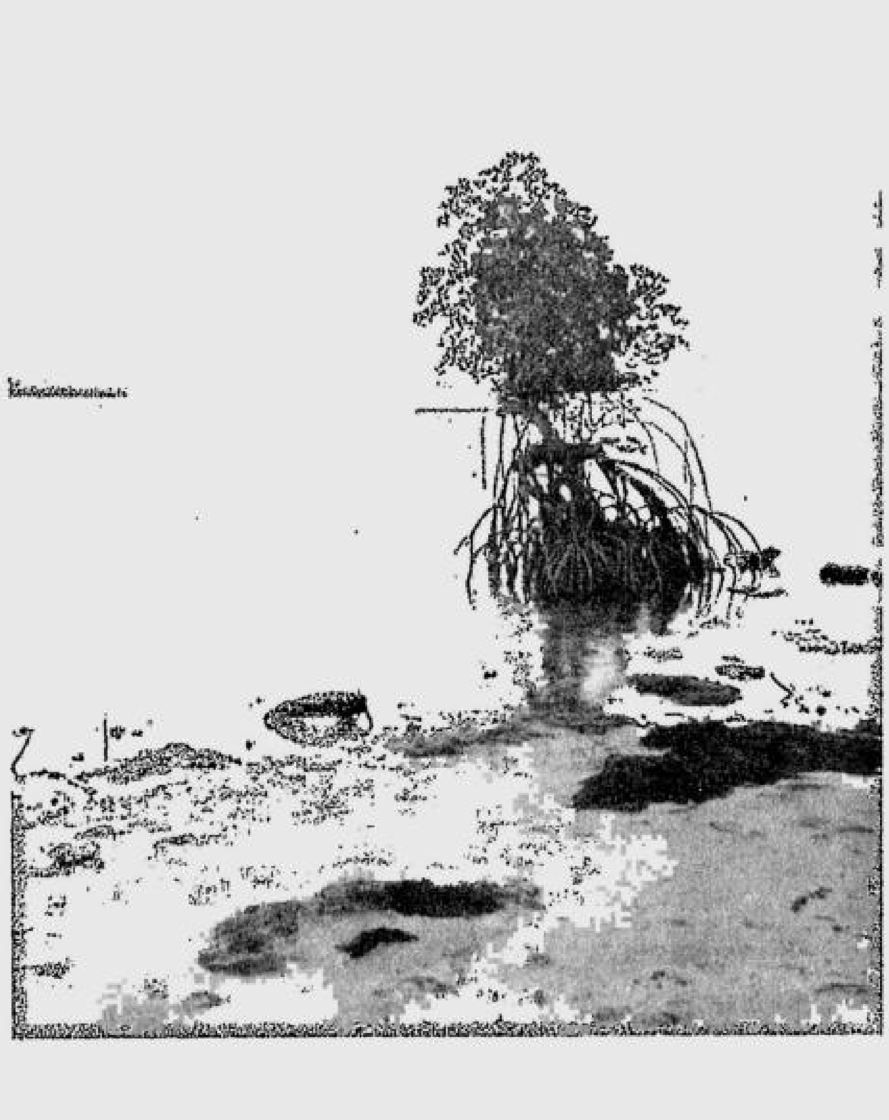
Castañeda spent nine days in Puerto Princesa when he was commissioned by Gaye Lim of Dos Palmas to shoot black-and-white frames for the resort. The photographs will add a contemporary and eclectic touch to the resort's rustic cottages.

But until Feb. 28, the photographs that reflect the blessings and beauty of the islands will be on exhibit at the Flute Wine and Restaurant at the Plaza Royale, 120 LP Leviste St. (formerly Alfaro), Salcedo Village, Makati.



"BIYAYA"

REY Castañeda



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